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Joseph Hutton

PERSONAL DUTIES

AND

SOCIAL RELATIONS.

A VOLUME OF DISCOURSES ON

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT AND CHARACTER.

BY THE LATE

JOSEPH HUTTON, LL.D.

EDITED,

WITH A PREFATORY SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR,

BY HIS SON

JOSEPH HENRY HUTTON, B.A.

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PREFACE.

To select from the writings of a man, once admired as a preacher, and beloved as a friend, is always a difficult, and often a thankless task. It is not easy for one mind to choose, what will seem to the many, the best and most characteristic productions of a writer, who had various qualifications for pulpit influence and success; and I should not have undertaken to edit a small volume of sermons, selected from a large stock of MSS., had I not felt it due to my father's many attached friends, to give them some legacy of his labours amongst them, especially as I knew, that not many years ago, a numerously-signed requisition was sent to him, at Derby, earnestly entreating him to print a volume of sermons, for the benefit of his former hearers, both in the north and south of England. This is the real explanation of this volume. It is an offering to the members of those congregations, that were once wont to sit under his ministry.

I cannot hope, that it will satisfy all who read it. Many will miss some favourite sermon, that they had counted on obtaining in print; and many will fancy,

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that they could have selected, out of the mass of papers now consigned to silence and the solitary eye, a volume more expressive, powerful, and characteristic. It is possible. Time has not permitted me to go myself through all, or nearly all the MSS. left; nor, perhaps, have all been examined, even by one or other of those who have assisted me so readily in the task. But I trust my readers will believe, that I was only anxious to do full justice and honour to him to whom justice and honour are the least tribute that can be offered now. And let it be remembered, that the more attractive a preacher is out of the pulpit, *i. e.* as a man, in domestic and social life, the more will his pulpit addresses rouse and delight his hearers when uttered by himself, and the more will they lose, when presented in the cold pages of a volume of sermons. It has always appeared to me, that my father was so much more as a man than as a preacher,—deep and lasting as his influence often was in the latter capacity,—that his sermons lose more than many sermons would, in losing the help of his countenance, and his manner of delivery. There are many popular preachers, who shine infinitely more as preachers, than as men. By their rhetorical ability, culture, and glowing imagination, they are enabled to use the resources of their knowledge or thought, in composition or extempore address, under the influence of excitement, and the direction of ambition, with wonderful success. They have the art of impressing their hearers, especially uneducated hearers, without much reality in their thought or language. Their popularity may be transient,

but their so-called eloquence is undoubted. They are speakers by nature. And those truly great preachers, whose inspiration is religious fervour, whose words are given them from Heaven, to move the conscience, and awaken the higher life of man,—who partake, in fact, of what is now commonly called, the prophetic nature,—have similar intellectual gifts, united with their higher order of character, and deeper faith. This is a very rare class, and yet there are a hundred—nay, a thousand—shades of such influence, which may be included in it, if we turn from the highest and vanished race of prophets and apostles, to the Wesleys, Robert Hall, or to such men as Mr. Robertson in our own day. Far as my father was removed, in natural endowments, from these eminently gifted men,—as he was always himself resolute to maintain,—he was, at least, far more closely allied to them in sympathy, refinement, earnestness, and depth of nature, than to the mere florid orator. Oratory was neither his *forte* nor his fault. Not that he was not, at times, eloquent; but fluency and inspiration came to him but rarely, and only in the retirement of his study. There, his subject would, not unfrequently, kindle him into real eloquence, as may be seen especially in the three sermons on Patriotism, and that on Free Trade, which is now published for the second time.

Still, he was not a preacher by nature. Great speakers and preachers, have always felt themselves at home in presence of a multitude; have always felt, that they could command attention, and more or less sway the minds before them, as the wind bends the trees;

whereas, all who knew my father, knew how keen was his dread of public speaking, how great was his hatred of the platform. He always prefaced any address that he was called upon to make, (and the occasions, of course, did often occur, to one holding his position in the Unitarian body,) with the words, "My friends know, that I dislike public speaking;" or, "You know that I have no gift of eloquence." In truth, though an Irishman, in some respects, by temperament, as well as by birth, he had a great deal of nervous, English shyness and reserve, and always felt, that an audience put a sudden stop to the natural flow of his ideas, and consequently, checked speech, instead of awakening and rousing his powers of utterance.

But more than this, my father was usually a very slow writer, and almost always laboured at his sermon, under much anxiety and depression of spirits. Well can his children remember the painful Saturdays, that cast the heavy, and often the sole gloom, of the week, upon the cheerful light of their home. Week after week, have we found him, walking to and fro in his study, with the pen between his lips, and the frown of anxious thought upon his brow, till we learnt to dread the day, because of the anxiety associated with it in our minds. Nay, so laborious generally was writing to him, partly from fastidiousness of taste, and partly from the natural slowness with which he expressed his thoughts, that I have known him take four or five hours in writing a single letter, while those around him were despatching a handful. Of course, the letter was worth preserving, as few letters are. It was a beautiful com-

position, beautifully written out, and such as would be treasured by its recipient, probably for life; but it was produced at great labour to himself. His letter-writing began in times when letters were few and costly, and that may possibly account for a habit he never laid aside, of writing at length and carefully to his friends, —his playful humour, literary and domestic tastes, and broad social and political sympathies, all frequently finding some place and expression in the finely-inscribed, and perhaps, well-crossed page.

But to return from this digression; the great charm of his preaching, was always the simplicity and reality with which he spoke; and, still more, perhaps, the high honour, the Christian charity, and genial human love, that shone forth continually from his countenance. The soul of goodness, expressed in earnest exhortation and choice language, gave constant interest to his preaching; and I scarcely know any instance, in which *the whole man* was so expressively read in the countenance and manner of the speaker. "It is better than a sermon, to look at him," were words, once said to me, by one of the sincerest and most sceptical of men; and I think many of his hearers must have felt the same thing. This volume, while it testifies to the simplicity, vigorous reasoning power, and occasional eloquence and beauty, of my father's writings, yet cannot be affirmed to present all the finest traits of a character, which, as I have said, was never naturally turned to the public. But some features of his mind it *does* manifest; and others, I will, so far as it is possible, endeavour to revive.

I think a leading excellence of these sermons, is their peculiar simplicity. I mean by this, the absence of all effort at producing an effect. There is no such thing, in all the volume, as rhetorical flourish and display. It is not only the natural orator, who feels the temptation to use whatever powers of expression he may have, for purposes of effect. We all see and experience, only too often, that the same temptation besets the most indifferent writers and speakers, perhaps none the less because they are conscious that their powers are not equal to their tasks. There was nothing of this,—no touch of the *ad captandum* writer,—in my father's preaching. Any one, reading through this volume, will admit the truth of this statement. The single desire it reveals, is an earnest moral one,—that of convincing of truth, rousing to duty, or warming into benevolence, charity, piety, and love; and there is no turning aside, anywhere, to the right or to the left, from the purpose in hand, merely to amuse, to arrest attention, or to charm. He took up the ministry at his father's wish, instead of following his own inclination, which, as he often said, had turned towards the medical profession. But with a most single-minded and unswerving faithfulness, did he devote himself to the duties and responsibilities of the office, seemingly untouched by those temptations of the pulpit, that prove so sore to the vanity of other men. His fine moral nature, and literary tastes, found in it a good field of exercise and culture; and many who heard him, were loath to believe, that he could ever have thought or wished for any other work. Yet not only was this the truth, with regard to

his own case, but his intimate friends can bear witness, how often he expressed wonder, at any one's choosing so toilsome, and, as he expressed it, so "brain-spinning" an occupation; and how seriously he warned all young men contemplating it, who consulted him on the subject, of the laborious nature, difficulties, and temptations of the office.

Simple and unambitious as these sermons, and all his sermons are, they could not be less ambitious than my father's own character. In the sermon which I have called "The True Ambition," those who knew him best will think, that he describes less what he desired to be, than what he was, though he would have been far from admitting this himself. This striking characteristic was referred to in the brief notice of his character in the 'Christian Reformer' for last May, by his early and highly valued friend, the Rev. J. J. Tayler, who intimated that in him it amounted almost to a fault. So far as my father's dislike of distinction or publicity, arose from his cordial detestation for anything that broke the tranquillity of his mind,—"fuss," as he would himself call it, with characteristic horror,—I think he would himself have regarded it as a fault. Social as he was, he himself often admitted, that he loved the retirement of a very small social circle even too well. But, so far as ambition implies the desire for *comparative* excellence, he would never have thought himself so far from it, as he earnestly desired to be. It was a fault which he deeply and habitually disapproved, and strove to root out from the minds of all who came under his influence. He was glad to be useful; he was grateful and happy to

be loved, but he dreaded for himself, and all his family, the desire to shine. And though no one, apparently, ever had it in less dangerous degree, he did not think it could be too carefully guarded against. Perhaps, of all his favourite quotations from Scripture, there was none to which he oftener referred, as the only legitimate aim of human ambition, than Christ's praise of the woman who had poured upon him the precious ointment, "She hath done what she could."

Another very characteristic vein of earnest moral conviction, runs through these sermons. Few living men, probably, acted more strictly and habitually up to the injunction, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Living in a most critical age, and belonging, as he did, to a family that was, certainly, very far from the least critical in the society around him, his own disposition too having, evidently, tended very strongly in the same direction in earlier life, he was, nevertheless, habitually, scrupulously, anxiously charitable. When all around him were giving vent to satirical or caustic criticisms, or harshly condemning the conduct of some person under discussion, a shade of displeasure would always gather on his brow; and when he spoke, it was gently to condemn the ridicule or harsh judgment, and to suggest, first one and then another mitigation, of the fault that had been condemned.

Besides the traits of character that I have mentioned, these sermons represent my father in being eminently practical. Sermons may be practical in two ways; either by forcibly appealing, directly, to the affections and consciences of men, and so leading them to act aright;

or by appealing to the will and conscience, *indirectly*, through the reason, making them alter their course of action *first*, and influencing the character afterwards. Some of my father's sermons were practical in one way, and others in the other. Those, I think, which almost all will regard as the finest and most characteristic, directly addressed themselves to the human heart. But a not inconsiderable number, appealed directly to the reason and moral judgment, and so led his hearers to adopt sound principles, and decide upon right courses of action; and this is, perhaps, the way in which a considerable class of men, who, while anxious to do right, are accustomed to test right rather by a certain reasonableness, than by moral instinct, must often be swayed. "Does moral feeling, and religious faith or sentiment, (of which some preachers, of modern times especially, say so much,) dictate really *wise* actions?" they sometimes ask themselves. "When I do, or strive to do, what is called right, am I a fool? Because, if so, I can attend no longer to such dictates: my conscience must be morbid, and my sentiments or convictions unreal. What is the use of my understanding, if I do not consult it?" It was to men so reasoning, that many of my father's practical sermons, appealed with peculiar force, showing that Reason established the truths of morality and religion. They showed how sin is also folly. He seemed to force certain courses of conduct on his hearers, as men of sense and discernment. Again, there was a deep, practical, moral wisdom, in the rules that he frequently laid down for the regulation of human conduct. His clear judgment was always reliable, when

determining the value of outward observances on the mind. Rules and habits, adopted and carried out, had, he was convinced, a kindling power upon the inner man, and prove their good effects by their reaction on feeling and faith. The worth of such outward rules and habits, my father measured with a singularly true discernment. There are several instances of this kind of practical power, in the sermons here printed, though they are not, I think, the most numerous class.

The vigorous common sense and logic, which pervades all my father's sermons, and is the main characteristic of those of which I have been speaking, is the more remarkable, because he was often regarded as the most unpractical of men; and there was something in his temperament to justify this impression. His nature had in it absolutely nothing of shrewd, phlegmatic prudence; and yet it was not the generous warmth of his character, which principally led his friends to think him unpractical. He was, what is usually called, an extremely "absent man;" though he had, at the same time, that lively and sensitive physical organization, which generally makes those who have it, (except where it is combined with an unusually contemplative intellect,) peculiarly sensitive to present influences,—the very reverse of absent-minded. My father, though not what would be termed contemplative, was almost as much subject to reverie, as any poet. It was usually his sensitiveness to the immediate power of present influences, which laid hold upon him, and threw him into his most absent moods. The impulse *came from* the influences around him, though it carried him away from

those influences. But once thus preoccupied, it was often very difficult to gain his attention. I never knew any one whose mind seemed to dwell, at such times, further apart from his body, and so difficult of recall on an emergency.

Beautiful scenery exerted this abstracting influence upon him, perhaps as much as anything. The sensations of delight with which, in some summer holiday, he roamed along the sea-shore (perhaps before the rest of his household had risen in the morning, for he was always an early riser), or walked about the hills and woods in some rich, inland country, were only appreciable by those who watched him, as well as listened to his occasional outbursts of delight. For he was often so affected, by the scene before him, as to lose consciousness of the time, and of his companions, and even of the very scene itself, that had thus affected him. His mind appeared to be temporarily cut off from its earthly moorings. And it was hardly an agreeable task to awaken him from his reverie, when, as often happened, his eye was glistening with tears, and his whole countenance radiant with unspeakable enjoyment.

This love of beauty, and especially the beauty of the natural world, was one distinctive element of his intellectual character, that gave interest to his writings, whenever, by way of illustration or description, he alluded to the features of earth and sky; but he never drew upon this, or any other sphere of thought or imagination, for the sake of ornament. Never was a love of beauty *less* put forward than his was, in many, not to say most, of his discourses. He seemed to write

wholly from present suggestion and moral impulse, and never intentionally to draw, for illustration or ornament, upon the latent resources of his mind.

It was, indeed, neither his strong and practical understanding, nor his sensitive taste, and keen love of beauty, but his deep and tender human sympathies, which were the inspiring element of the most moving of his sermons. This principally gave the kindling power to his preaching, at the same time that it endeared him to his friends. Such sermons as that on "Sowing and Reaping," on "The only Sure Refuge," and the last printed in this volume, on "Separation and Reunion," were the natural and most characteristic outpourings of his sympathetic nature. His was positively the *genius* of human sympathy. The most delicate sense of honour was not written more clearly on his brow, than sympathy in his eyes. One of his favourite seals was an Irish harp, with the inscription, "Je réponds à qui me touche." Nothing could be more truly characteristic of him, if, at least, we restrict the meaning to the right kind of responsiveness,—responsiveness to the touches of noble example or sentiment, or to the appeals of compassion and of grief,—for his nature was not responsive in the sense of being pliant, or easily moved from its own centre. But its chords responded more readily and delicately, to every touch of fine thought, of imaginative beauty, of lofty resolution, and of human sorrow or joy, than any other I have ever known. Every friend who ever consulted him, in doubt, difficulty, or distress, or called him to a dying bed, could bear witness to this singular tenderness of his

sympathetic nature. Indeed, he could not *help* "rejoicing with them that rejoiced, and weeping with them that wept."

And yet, he had a certain reserve and deference of character, that made it impossible to him, to attain to any real intimacy with persons similarly constituted, even among his juniors. He could not, by any effort of will, break through the ice of their superficial reserve, as many men do. Indeed, he knew himself too well, to resolve to act contrary to the dictates of his own plastic but unintrusive nature, and never attempted to push an intimacy further than it would go of itself, without any pressure from him. A man more entirely ruled and guided, in social life, by the free and delicate instincts of a singularly genial and yet rather shy nature, I never knew. "How is it," I would sometimes ask him, "that you never seem to make any way to intimacy with so and so; he has a fine character; I wonder you do not make him open his mind to you more; I am sure he likes you."—"Indeed, I don't know," he would say; "he makes no advances; he is very reserved."—"But it is not for *you* to make the advances, being by far the older man?"—"It may be," he would reply, "but I feel no call, nor capacity, to push the acquaintance, though he does, I admit, seem a very attractive man."

But with children, of course, he felt no such shyness; and with them, the sympathetic character of his nature, shone out in its brightest form. He delighted in the companionship of happy children; and it was, in fact, to preserve some record of this marked characteristic, that I selected the first sermon in this volume, which

expresses the almost sacred sympathy which he felt for the innocent mirth of the young. Any merry little laughing face, however dirty, met in the streets, would attract him irresistibly. It was always the same, I believe, from his youth up; and his last years, when he delighted to gather his grandchildren around him, and to play and dance with them, certainly proved no exception. He says, most characteristically, in a letter to my elder sister, written from Dublin, within a year of his death,—"On my journey hither, I had one or two pleasant companions, but none so interesting as a lady and two dear children, to whom I took a great fancy. I hope I shall meet them, where I hope to meet not a few of such 'shake of the hand and good-bye passengers,'—in Heaven." With children, he often seemed to renew his youth, and become again the gayest of the gay. Yet, it should be remarked, that it was not always, nor usually, sympathy with the gay mood of others, which led to moods of gaiety in himself. The mood would come upon him, at any time, in his home, or among very intimate friends; and sallies of playfulness, which, in any other man, would have been grotesque and unnatural, seemed to spring naturally from the irrepressible well of joy within him. So fond was he, however, of the young, that, wherever he lived, he became known to the children of the neighbourhood; and in Derby, there were few who lived anywhere within the circuit of his walks, who did not know and welcome "the kind gentleman," who was always ready to smile upon them, and pat the little urchins on the head, or poke them with his stick, for fun.

Another, and even more striking, proof, of what I have called, I think legitimately, the genius of sympathy in him, was the remarkably full and versatile play of his mind, as evinced in reading. Whether it were a song of Burns, or a pathetic Irish story, full of humour and pathos, one of Dickens's best descriptions or dialogues, a novel of Sir W. Scott's, or, best of all, a play of Shakspeare's, there was hardly a thought or feeling, a character or a feature of character described, or introduced, that his reading did not bring out, with delicacy and truth. His reading, of all kinds, was at once animated, and yet in the most perfect taste. None who have ever heard him read Tennyson,—the 'Ulysses' or the 'Morte d'Arthur,' of both of which he was particularly fond,—can forget the vividness, with which he enjoyed himself, and enabled all who heard him to realize, the exquisite descriptions of scene and character there given. But, while his reading of descriptive poetry or prose was fine, I think his reading of dialogue or dramatic poetry was still more so. He had true dramatic insight into the various characters, and shades of feeling, portrayed, without having any of the faults that a cultivated taste will usually find, in what is called dramatic reading. His was true *reading*, and had none of those violent changes of tone and manner, which belong to the reading of those who do not understand the true distinction between reading and acting. His sympathetic and mobile imagination, was never so fully shown, as in his reading of Shakspeare. From their earliest childhood, his children remember feeling his power in this direction. Before the age of twelve, we had, many of us, en-

joyed, and entered into the power, of some play, of which we could scarcely have had the faintest comprehension from a personal perusal. He not only enjoyed the breadth of Shakspeare's wide range of character, but gave all the great variety of his characters, with equal spirit and taste. From Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, and Lear, down to Falstaff, Shallow, Dogberry, and Verges, all seemed to live again in his rendering.

His reverence for Shakspeare was profound. He never allowed that he could err in his interpretations of human nature. Good and classical scholar as he was in his college days, and greatly as he enjoyed, in middle life, to read again the Greek tragedians with his sons, he never failed to remark their vast inferiority to Shakspeare in knowledge of man, their comparative narrowness of sphere, and faintness of portraiture. Indeed, among the Greek poets, he always placed Homer first. In order to preserve some record of the breadth and depth of my father's literary tastes, I have ventured to add the lecture on the true ends, and best instruments of culture, at the end of this volume, which all who knew him well, will feel to be truly characteristic.

The same lecture gives also ample evidence of his warm love of art, which was gracefully touched upon in the brief notice of his character, by the Rev. J. J. Tayler, before referred to. No one could accompany him to an exhibition of paintings, or works of Art of any sort, without observing how deeply he enjoyed, and with what discernment he criticized, the works both of ancient and modern artists. He entered, with a truly catholic enjoyment, into the best pictures of all the dif-

ferent schools. He could estimate the merits of Turner, at the same time admitting his frequent eccentricities, without giving up his admiration of Claude and Salvator Rosa; and, no less, could he enter into the faithful delineations, and masterly power, of all the able representatives of the Pre-Raphaelite school, while he continued to enjoy, as much as ever, the less singular productions of such artists as Landseer and Cooper, Cope and Mulready. His sympathies were characteristically broad and genial.

My father's literary tastes, were perhaps, in many respects, more peculiarly characteristic of him than his political; at least, in the narrower, and more technical, sense of the word political. But few of the sermons in this volume, are more expressive of his character, and deepest convictions, than those which set forth his interpretation of social and political obligations in that broader sense in which high-minded men, of all shades of political opinion, might alike accept them. There was no class of obligations, which he realized more constantly himself, or was more anxious to impress upon those around him, than those which spring from the mutual dependence of the different classes of men, and the human brotherhood of all. And this predominance of a social view of human obligation, runs so distinctly through all his sermons, that the title I have chosen for the present volume, 'Personal Duties and Social Relations,' was irresistibly suggested to my mind. Social duties, in all departments of life, took hold upon him with peculiar force, and especially, perhaps, the much neglected duties of social courtesy between different classes.

If ever my father showed himself intolerant, it was of that petty *hauteur*, with which men in one grade of life, are apt to treat those of the grade nominally below them. He never forgot, he never would suffer his children to forget, that distinctions of rank and education, are morally insignificant in the sight of God. For him, Burns's lines, which he was never tired of recalling,

> "The rank is but the guinea stamp,
> The man's the gowd for a' that,"

expressed a solemn religious truth. His sense of the true spiritual equality of men in different social positions, was so true and strong, that he was made almost scornful, by anything breathing the spirit of caste, whether in private society, or in political life. His hatred of slavery was a true religious enthusiasm. It sprang from his unquestioning faith, that God had made "of one blood all the nations of the earth." And many of his friends will still remember, how indignantly he opposed the view, that Unitarian organizations, being founded on a principle of doctrinal unity, ought to maintain, as corporate bodies, an impartial silence on the subject of slavery. For any religious body, on whatever basis constituted, to ignore the sin of slavery, was, he thought, practically to ignore, altogether, the most important of God's revelations concerning Himself, and His relations with the human race.

It was this deep faith in the religious equality of all men, that tended to make him, in later life, sympathize more and more with democratic political views. A Conservative in his political philosophy in his younger days, he grew a Radical as he grew older. But his

Radicalism always seemed to me, to be more the result of strong sympathy with the working classes, and something almost like shame in sharing the possession of exclusive political privileges, than an inference from constitutional or historical studies. I do not mean that he would have admitted any real inconsistency between the teaching of history and the teaching of social morality, but simply that, as a matter of fact, his political convictions had a moral, rather than an historical origin. In argument with him, no one could help feeling, that a constantly growing indignation against social exclusiveness of all kinds, was the true root of his growing political radicalism. For example, though himself the eldest of his family, there was no principle of English law which he more strongly condemned than that of primogeniture. Thus he grew more and more democratic in his later years, when he used to read Mr. W. J. Fox's weekly contributions to the 'Dispatch,' with almost uniform interest and sympathy. But he always retained his distrust of the ballot, as inconsistent with the manliness of political life, and with that direct responsibility which ought to attach to every exercise of political influence. Though in sentiment a democrat, his views on sectarian politics, like those on sectarian theology, formed a comparatively very unimportant part of his whole faith. Few men of warmer patriotic feeling ever existed. There was nothing he disliked more, than that colourless cosmopolitanism, which enlightened politicians sometimes affect. Both for Ireland and England,—the country of his birth, and of his adoption, as he used to call them,—he felt an

Irish warmth of love; not a mere latent affection, such as most men first make acquaintance with when a great danger threatens their country,—but a vivid fondness, which really came next in his heart to the love which he bore his family and friends. I think the sermons on patriotism, are as truly expressive of my father's nature, as any that he ever wrote.

He was a Dissenter by political conviction, quite as much as by doctrinal necessity, and for the last twenty years of his life, he was a constant reader of the 'Nonconformist,' and entertained the most sincere respect for its editor, Mr. Miall, whose kind and generous tribute to his memory, would have given him, had it been possible for him to foresee it, the purest pleasure. He had a deep belief in the *warping* influence of State endowments on the conscience and intellect of a nation, and often said that he should conscientiously object to receive even the *Regium Donum*,—the small State grant-in-aid, given to the Presbyterian ministers of Ireland,—had he ever been elected minister of an Irish Presbyterian congregation. Even if he could have accepted every statement in the Church creeds and articles, he would certainly have remained outside its communion. And he was not less warmly opposed to "subscriptions" of any kind, than to State endowments. He would no more have consented to subscribe to a creed, even though at the time heartily accepting it, than to receive State support on the strength of such a subscription; so jealously did he hold himself aloof from any influence, which, as he feared, might permanently bias the free movement of his own convictions. In this sense, he was almost a *sternly* scrupulous Dissenter.

But if he was, by the strongest political conviction, a Dissenter, there never was a Dissenter who delighted less in the attitude of mind which the word expresses. It was, perhaps, on this very account, that he attached so much importance to the duty of resolute nonconformity. Controversy was always painful to him; to agree, always far more natural than to differ. And there was, therefore, no heroism which he rated more highly, than that of the man who tore himself away from old ties of friendship and affection, for the sake of giving free scope to his perceptions of truth and right. It was extremely rare for my father to compose in verse; nor are those I am about to quote, by any means his best lines, but they are, perhaps, more part of his own mind than any others, and express, certainly, the constant ideal of his own life. Mr. Lindsey's sacrifices in the cause of truth, had deeply impressed him; and, under the date of 1827, I find the following lines addressed to him :—

"TO REV. THEOPHILUS LINDSEY.

"While learning, worth, simplicity of mind
Beyond the common measure of mankind,
Integrity, and piety sincere,
A guileless heart, e'en as the noonday clear,
Through deep devotion to the sacred cause
Of Truth, and of the Gospel's simple laws,
Earth's riches, honours, and esteem exchanged
For poverty, contempt, and friends estranged;
A soul which, spurning every sordid thought,
Deemed Heaven's approving smile thus cheaply bought,—
While these shall claim the meed of honest praise,
Or in the breast one generous throb can raise,
Lindsey, thy name shall stand engraved on high
In golden lines before the admiring eye.

> And long that name the beacon-light shall be
> To those who, in their views resembling thee,
> Would learn to face each trial undismayed,
> Each worldly good on virtue's altar laid,
> Run the same course thy spotless Master ran,
> Cast off the fear of weak, misjudging man,
> And, by the steps the suffering Jesus trod,
> Through shame and scorn approach the throne of God."

But, as I have said, the confessor of an unpopular truth stood so high in his esteem, in great measure because he felt so much desire to sympathize with, and so much pain in differing from, all the nobler phases of religious faith. Sectarianism he sincerely despised; and the following remarks, in a letter to a friend, expressed what formed part of the permanent conviction of his life:—"I regret more than ever," he says, "the sectarian spirit which keeps religionists—of various opinions, but of equal sincerity, and honesty, and earnestness in the pursuit of truth—apart, and long for the time, when not merely all Christians, but all sincere truth-seekers, shall consider themselves as members of one Church, and kneel together at the foot-stool of His throne, Who alone has power to enlighten them all, Who alone knows perfectly what the truth is. Blessed time: when will it come?—when love shall produce order in the school, and all shall listen, in reverential *silence*, for the Master's voice, instead of noisily wrangling, as they now do, about His words and will,—each one gathering a little knot of disciples round him, and insisting that he alone, and those who think with him, have listened, and heard, and understood aright. *Sects*, I fear, for a season longer must be: but of the sectarian spirit, as it is manifested by *all* denominations (my own by no means

excluded), I have become heartily sick. In religion, at least, there ought to be 'liberty, equality, fraternity;' all ought to be one with each other, in the heartfelt desire and endeavour to be one with God."

Assigning, as my father thus always did, the first place, in all his thoughts and estimates of men and opinions, to *principles* of thought and action, and but a very secondary place to individual opinions, he would, I am sure, have desired to have the same rule followed, in the selection of a volume of sermons, by which he might be recalled to the memory of surviving friends; and it is by this rule, therefore, that I have wished to be guided. In philosophy and theology, he was well known among his friends as a Necessarian and a Unitarian of what is called the older school; but none, of either school, ever contended more firmly against the exaggerated stress laid upon such differences of opinion, often at the cost of a spiritual freedom which he held as a thousand times more important. He esteemed the miraculous intervention of God, in behalf of the Gospel of Christ, as essential to the authenticity of the Christian revelation. Latterly, indeed, he was less positive on many points, than he had been earlier in life, and proverbially "had his doubts" on this, that, and the other question. Still, he clung tenaciously to an "authoritative" declaration of the truth of Christ's message. His Unitarianism was strong and dear to him, as the religion of the natural and simple reason, as well as being, in his belief, in perfect accordance with Christian teaching. Christian Unitarianism was dearer still, as supplying something more cheering and sustaining, than

natural reason could ever grasp with certainty. But he loved not, in his pulpit services, to enter on disputed points. He preferred, as I have said, except when distinctly summoned by his duty to enter the field of controversy, to assume the broad ground of Christian faith and sentiment, and address himself to the common understandings and hearts of practical men; and that I have given no distinctly doctrinal sermon in this volume, is due solely to my persuasion that he would desire his memory to be connected with one perfectly free from the polemical spirit. The general character of his faith is, of course, clearly traced in almost every sermon; and the outline of his belief may easily be collected from the series.

The two strongest attachments of his life, out of his own family, were, probably, to his two successors in the Nottingham pulpit, the Rev. Henry Turner, his chosen companion, as well as fellow-student, at York, and the Rev. Benjamin Carpenter. The early death of Mr. Turner, closed their affectionate intercourse and correspondence, very soon after my father's removal to Leeds. On his death, my father was called to preach his funeral sermon, in Nottingham. The words he printed, as a motto to that sermon, had been quoted by him, in a letter to his friend, some seven years previously. They are not less descriptive of my father, than of Mr. Turner, to whom he applied them. As the letter referred to, is very characteristic of the style of my father's letters about that time, I shall extract a large portion of it here. It is beautifully written, on a long folio sheet, crossed from end to end, and its com-

position must have occupied no short time, to a pen so slow and careful as my father's.

"TO THE REV. HENRY TURNER.

"Thursday, May 25th, 1815.

"Te mihi junxerunt nivei sine crimine mores,
Simplicitasque sagax, ingenuusque pudor,
Et bene nota fides, et candor frontis honestæ,
Et studia à studiis non aliena meis."
Heu! quid disjungit? memet quid diripit à me?
"In promptu causa est"—desidiosus ego.
"Non ego mendosos ausim defendere mores,
Falsaque pro vitiis arma movere meis." *

"You see, my dear friend, I have not been learning the art of literary cookery in vain; never did I hash up a sermon which expressed my sentiments more exactly, or contained less of my own in it, than the above confession in Latin verse. To the four first lines (shame upon me!), you owed this tardy letter. They brought my friend so strongly to my mind, and set my folly in such strong colours before me, that I resolved, as soon as I had read them, to defer writing no longer: perhaps, too, the approach of the York examination, and the dread of facing you, with all my sins upon my head, may have added to their effect. 'Oh

* Pure habits of life, without reproach, have joined thee to me,
And a wise simplicity, and an ingenuous modesty,
And a well-known sincerity, and the brightness of an honourable brow,
And pursuits allied to my own.
Alas! what disjoins us? what snatches from me myself?
The cause is seen at once—my lazy self.
I dare not defend faulty habits,
And take up false weapons in behalf of my sins.

that those lips had language!' or that I had not such a mortal aversion to the use of my pen, is what I often say to the shade, 'the injured shade,' that hangs over my chimneypiece.* I doubt much, whether Love itself, could make me a decent correspondent. Against such a season, should it ever come, (again with a profound sigh,) and find my fair one *out* of Nottingham, what would I not give, for Fortunatus his wishing-cap, or for a bag of Ulysses, to send my sighs in by the waggon! I could fill it, you know, any half-hour in the course of the day, and should have nothing to write but the direction. What pleasure, then, to imagine her receiving the parcel, with glistening eyes, from the carrier,—running upstairs to her own room, placing it carefully on the toilet, first looking wistfully at it, then making a slight puncture with a needle, and throwing herself in the armchair, to listen, with clasped hands and parted lips, to the soft, susurrant sounds. Oh for a bag of Ulysses, to save the lover the trouble of translating that which is untranslatable, and embodying that which has no substance! But even such a machine, would be of no use in friendship, and therefore I must, if possible, learn to write. Where there is shame, says Johnson, there may yet be virtue: mine is not quite gone; assist me, then, whilst there is time, in the work of reformation; sting me, if you can, into exertion.

"As for my professional exertions, after which you inquire, as a brother should do, I cannot say much for

* There it hung, through life,—as it hangs still,—over my father's study chimneypiece.

myself. I am still intending to turn over the new leaf, making an attempt now and then, but still suffering it to flap-to, and leave the book open at the same chapter, viz. chapter the first, in which the author makes ready for his journey, consults his friends, forms his plans, and lays-in part of his provision, but, in consequence of an unforeseen accident, postpones his departure.

"If all were to write their spiritual travels, how many, like me, would stop here! In composition, though I write with greater ease, I do not think that I improve. One reason of this is, that I have foolishly undertaken too many tuitions, from which, having undertaken them, I cannot immediately release myself. In consequence, I am often obliged to feed my people with food, the materials of which have been too hastily collected and compounded: happily, they are not very nice. I know not how those manage, who keep school all day; after such drudgery, I should be quite incapable of any serious employment. Besides the services of the Sunday, we have a meeting every Wednesday evening, in the vestry, of those few members of the society, who choose to attend, when a chapter of the New Testament is read and expounded, and any difficulties that may occur, discussed, principally by Mr. T—— and myself. At present, we are going regularly through John's Gospel. The meeting, of course, is concluded by a prayer. How do you manage about visiting your people? My conscience pricks me very much on that head. I have a class of young catechumens on Tuesday morning, who are reading your father's Abstract, which I like very much, as

you may suppose I should, both from my affectionate and filial regard for the author, and my attachment to the good old school. In the paths of theology, as in those of life, I like to meet my fellow-Christians as often as I can, and am no admirer of the gloomy, unfrequented moors, about Doubting Castle. I hear them, besides, hymns and catechism, and examine them in the Sunday's sermon; this last is, I think, a good plan: a familiar explanation of the sermon, in the vestry, may often do more good, than the sermon itself, from the pulpit. I enjoy much the prospect of training up these lambs of my flock; they are more hopeful subjects than the old sheep.

"On the whole, however, if I could do my duty by them, I should think myself happy in my people, and have no wish to change. I wish, from the bottom of my heart, I had you near me; there is no one with whom I sympathize so entirely, or who would excite me so much to love and good works. Robberds gave us two excellent sermons last Sunday week, one for our daily schools, (from Ecclesiastes vii. 12,) on the Excellency of Knowledge, which brought an unusually good collection, and another, a very beautiful one, on the spring, 'Consider the lilies of the field!' I had never heard him before, and admired both his matter and manner, very much; indeed, the admiration was universal, and so lively in the expression, that, if I had not been able, by association, to transfer some of the credit to myself, considering him, in the first place, as a friend,—at least, elect,—secondly, as Mrs. R——'s husband, and thirdly, for a climax, as H. T——'s brother, I

know not what spiteful feelings might have entered into my mind. As it is, he has only excited a little stirring emulation, the vibrations of which do not by any means pass the limits of pleasure. I was sorry we could see so little of him. He arrived only on the Saturday, and left on the Tuesday morning,—I am afraid, with no very favourable impression of the rough geniuses of Nottingham, who, though many of them very worthy and valuable friends for a continuance, do not discover all their merits in a day: in truth, there is no place where there is less of the *esprit de la société*, the knack (*poeticè* tact) of talking, of which Madame De Staël and the conversationers of Edinburgh say so much. For literature, I do not think we rank much above Bradford; nevertheless, I am content; for though I like the substance, I hate the froth of learning, and very much prefer even the still homely chat of stocking-weavers, to the eternal Grub Street perambulations of blue-stocking-wearers and philosophs. I should prefer the golden mean, I allow, but am thankful to be in the most bearable of the extremes. The still monotony of a Dutch lake is tiresome enough, but better, after all, than the noisy one of a Scylla and her whelps, (a Blue-stocking and her satellites,) drawing in every dirty wave and floating straw of literature, in the morning, only to spout it out, with increased vehemence, in the evening. I was glad to hear so good an account of your sister and of Messrs. Charles and John, of whom, you may be sure, I inquired,

"'Ecquid in antiquam virtutem animosque viriles,
Et pater Æneas, et avunculus excitat Hector?'

"I have hardly left myself time (for I am determined this letter shall go by to-night's post) to say anything of books. I am reading the Æneid over again, and recommend you to do the same. The second, fourth, and sixth books, are delightful throughout, and the third has some exquisite passages: enjoy them with me. It is good advice, I think, which some one has given, to have some one author always in hand,—to study *him*, and taste, or rather swallow others, and thus unite the advantages of critical, with those of general reading. In Latin, Virgil certainly should be my author. I am reading the Greek Tragedians with a Mr. H——, a very intelligent man, and a self-taught Grecian, who had the perseverance to go through the whole of the Iliad, without assistance. It is of great use to me, and obliges me to brush up my Greek, which was beginning to rust. We are reading, at present, the Antigone of Sophocles, which is certainly a beautiful play; but, after all, as far as I have seen, he must be very much prejudiced in favour of the Ancients, who would not give up all their Tragedies, in a lump, for the Macbeth, or the Hamlet, or the Othello, or perhaps others that might be mentioned, of Shakspeare.

"What do you think of Yates's answer to Wardlaw? Does it not even exceed your expectations? I can hardly conceive of anything more satisfactory, so far as it goes, and am sorry that he did not go on: the spirit, too, in which it is written, is excellent; and nothing, I think, can be better, or more seasonable, than the advice given at the close to Unitarian converts. To be sick of controversy, seems a very natural consequence of

being in love with Christianity; a little of it, now and then, as a medicine, is wholesome and necessary,—but to feed upon it constantly, is more than the healthy stomach could bear. Doubtless, he is amongst the red-hot. Have you heard lately from Glasgow? Who has got the Divinity Chair there? I saw something, in the papers, about some proceedings against Mr. Mylne, for preaching or praying in favour of Bonaparte. What was it? and how did it end? if you know. I expect my father, mother, M—— and H——, and perhaps J—— also, on this side this summer. We shall meet, probably, at Liverpool. They talk of sailing about the tenth of July. Is there any chance of your being in Lancashire, about that time? . . . London and York have been contending in my mind, for some time back: the latter, however, will conquer, unless J—— should think of visiting London before the examinations; in which case I should meet him there; but this does not seem probable now. I shall see you, then, in all likelihood, at York. If you have a mind to give me a scratch of your pen before, it will be more than I deserve, and I will be humbly thankful for it. Commend me, in the most proper manner, to your housekeeper and sister,

"'Jovisque
Et soror et conjux.'

Would that I too had a sister to consult, for my episcopal ease and comfort, as, I have no doubt, she does for yours! To your father, and mother, and brother, when you see or write to them, give my very affectionate remembrance. . . . Dear Turner, receive to your arms, with all his faults upon his head, your affectionate

friend: he was lost, but I hope he is found; at least, he intends never to be such a sinner again. Believe me, he loves you, and thinks of you always as a friend and a brother, though rather unwilling to tell you so, within hearing or reading of the postman."

These last words were written so near to the edge of the fold of the letter, under the seal, that a curious and unscrupulous postman might have found it tolerably easy, perhaps, to make them out. This will explain their meaning.—My father seems to have kept up a most vigorous correspondence, for those days, with his one chosen friend, and to be continually blaming his own negligence, for allowing it to flag. He begins another and earlier letter thus:—

"TO THE REV. HENRY TURNER.

"Friday, June 17th, 1814.

"DEAR TURNER,

"It is a long fortnight since I heard from you, and, I confess, I have treated you most shabbily. 'Sir,' says Johnson, 'a man must keep his friendships in constant repair, or he will soon find himself alone.' I wish, Sir, I must humbly reply, I had sense and spirit enough to act upon the conviction; but when did any of my countrymen ever keep anything in repair, his castle or his cabin, his pigstye or his hose? We are all of the Rack-rent family, and let the hole grow so big, before we take up the needle, that, even if we could take nine stitches at a time, instead of one, it would require an age to mend it. Not that I am afraid of losing you, after all, you know my frequent infirmities, and are

a benign, sweet-tempered fellow, which nobody would suppose, from the hang-dog, thief-taking likeness, that you have sent me. To tell the truth, I am almost ashamed of it, and shall be happy to take it down, as soon as you send me a better. . . . But to come to the principal object of my letter. Is there any hope of your being able to join me, next month, in a trip to Dublin? In a letter which I had a few days ago, my father and mother desire me to say, with their affectionate regards, that it will give them great pleasure to see you. I need not add, that I agree with them, with all my heart. Indeed, I wonder I did not think of it before; but a good thing never enters into my head in time. We have a fine summer, I should hope, in prospect; and the garden at Glasnevin, my mother proclaims, promises to be very productive this year. We would take a great many pleasant walks,—amongst the rest, to Pool —— in Wicklow, where there is a fine waterfall,—and a beautiful collection of paintings and statues. If you can manage it any way, we shall be very much obliged to you. Write as soon as you can, to say whether it is possible. I could stay for you, to the end of the second week in July; but the earlier, the better. No matter how soon after next Sunday week. My visit to Ireland, will prevent my attending the examination this year; but I propose being very regular, or at least frequent, in future. Give my very affectionate regards to my friends there, not forgetting particularly your father and brother, Mr. Wellby, Mr. K——, and Mrs. and Miss Cappe. If I can work myself up to it, I intend writing a line of peace to H——. At all events,

commend me in sincerity to him, A——, and B——, and my other friends and fellow-students. Any of them that will visit me at Nottingham, with, or even without, a sermon in their pockets, shall be made very welcome. What think you of Mr. W——'s proposed work? It is a great undertaking for him. I mentioned, in a note which I scrawled to G——, the other day, that if you and he, and M——, should fix upon any book, to be presented, in our name, to Mr. Wellby, I shall be glad to agree. If Todd can furnish it, perhaps you will be my proxy, advance the money for me, and sign my name, "ex animo tuo," which is to me the same as "ex animo meo." You will have found, before this, that I am alive and well; but solitude is my aversion. . . . G—— preached our charity sermon, with great acceptance, the third Sunday in May. I am afraid the little dog is flying off to Hull. Come, if you possibly can, and write soon to tell me; take care of yourself always, for my sake, who am your loving, though lazy friend and brother,

"J. H."

In writing subsequently from Walthamstow (March 24th, 1817), to Mr. Turner, after he had been appointed my father's successor at Nottingham, he says,—

"I am sure you may do a great deal of good amongst the younger part of the congregation, and assist in training some useful characters and bright ornaments of our church. What you *may* do, I know you *will*, which is more than I could say for myself. I hope, however, I shall mend, and fully intend to be much more useful in future, than I have been. I think my

virtue is gaining ground a little, and that I feel a stronger and more practical conviction of the urgent necessity of pressing forward in the course. The sympathy and encouragement of my friends, of those whom I really esteem and love, is always a great assistance, and a most inspiring motive to me. Let me always, then, my dear friend, have your faithful counsel, and good example, and prayers, and, so far as I can engage for myself, you shall have mine. That languor and deadness of the religious feelings, of which you complain, I often feel, and agree with you, that the constant cultivation of a devout spirit in private, is the only remedy. Might it not be of some use, however, to have different services, in some degree adapted to different frames of mind? When we cannot be fervent, we can be reverential, resigned, and submissive; and when we cannot feel as we ought to do, for ourselves, our interest may, perhaps, be excited for our fellow-creatures. Would it not be better, if, instead of attempting to introduce all the various subjects of prayer, into each devotional service, we were to allow different subjects to take the lead, at different times? We should then be able to consult the state of our minds, in making a selection. . . . I promised the teachers of the Boys' Sunday School, that I would ask you to look in upon them now and then, the only atonement I could make for my own neglect. . . . I have been reading our brother W——'s sermon. It is very good, and very characteristic of his happy mind. Have you seen J——'s, on religious reading? It is excellent. I have a great deal more to say, if I had room, but have

not, as you see; finally, then, take care of yourself, and farewell."

The letters of a young man of thoughtfulness and ability, to a college friend, are usually worth reading. He never writes again in the same way, when immersed in the active business of life, with a family round him, and many to provide for. At that age, my father appears to have had many valued associates, and pleasant companions, but only this one very intimate friend. It may easily be conceived, what a natural attachment would spring up between two men so sympathetic in their literary tastes and professional pursuits, and so decidedly different, as they must have been, in disposition. The breadth and humour of my father's genial intellect, would afford a relief to the more restricted tastes, and perhaps more concentrative mind, and more exclusively ministerial habits and predilections of his friend: the social love, and life-enjoying spirit, of the yet earnest Irishman, would naturally supplement the more reserved and quiet English nature of the refined and devout English student. Both were naturally studious; the one versatile and varied in his reading, gathering up musical Latin lines into his memory, from Catullus and Ovid, Virgil and Horace, while the other was pursuing his theological investigations, and considering the best methods of executing the varied duties of his ministry. If my father's mind was quicker in perception and suggestion, it was also, apparently, quicker to forget, and less zealous to apply. My father obviously delighted in literature *as such*. I cannot but believe, from my own remembrance, as well as

from my knowledge of him, that he found the paths of dogmatic theology somewhat dry, and biblical studies somewhat tedious. Not that this precluded him from entering upon them: far from it; no one was more resolute to engage in them, as far as he conceived that this was requisite to the proper fulfilment of the duties of his office. And very clear his judgment was, and very fearless in stating the whole truth that presented itself to him, and all the difficulties that beset his own view of the questions under consideration. Candour and conscientiousness marked all his criticisms. But he reverted with pleasure, from these pursuits, to the lighter and less abstract walks of literature. His mind delighted in clear pictures of life, such as the world of literature presents to us. It was an evident enjoyment to him to turn from the, at best, half-comprehended, dimly-grasped truths of theology, where his mind felt, with all reverential minds, how little is to be dogmatically ascertained or defined, to take up his Homer, or Virgil, or Herodotus, or some one of our English classics, for the relaxation of a quiet hour. I imagine that his friend found a greater *comparative* pleasure in theological study and ministerial labours.

Another friend was spared to my father through life, Mr. Turner's successor to the pulpit of the High Pavement Chapel, Nottingham, the Rev. B. Carpenter, with whom, I believe, my father first became acquainted in Leeds, while he (Mr. Carpenter) was minister of the Arian congregation then worshipping in Call Lane Chapel.

This friend, through life, was more like a brother of

my father's, than even an intimate friend. Indeed, it is seldom that brothers are found, so closely and warmly attached to each other as they were. You saw light gather over their countenances when they met, and that genial satisfaction seemed at once to take possession of them, which made itself apparent, and *felt*, in their growing mirthfulness, and the deepening glow of their serenity and happiness. They, too, were eminently dissimilar. The one was as naturally joyous, as the other was naturally grave, and the light gladness, and child-like gaiety, of the one, contrasted strikingly with the manly gravity, and thoughtful taciturnity, of the other. Hope was the living expression of the one countenance, while the other was rather expressive of faith. I never knew an instance, in which friendship had a more obviously exciting and quickening power, bringing out, as it did, the nicest traits and shades of character, the finer treasures of thought and experience, and the deepest realities of conviction. Admission into their joint society, was one of the most real pleasures of life, ever to be remembered, and always longed for again. Never can I forget, how my father's spirits seemed to burst into new life, when he was seated opposite Mr. Carpenter; how readily the jest came to his lips, which, pondered for some time by his companion, at last took full effect, and awoke a loud response of laughter of the most genuine and delightful kind.

Nor were their graver conversations and debates less interesting. The whole men expressed themselves, without fear or hesitation, to one another. My father's mind was undoubtedly the more open to doubt, his

friend's the more tenacious and conservative. But nothing could be more frank and fearless, and more patient and appreciative, of the other, than each was in turn. In a sermon preached by my father, in his own pulpit, shortly after Mr. Carpenter's death (from the text Philippians iii. 12–14), after dwelling on the essentially Christian nature of humility,—the humility of a soul unsatisfied with itself,—he thus concludes:—

"Happy will it be for us, my friends,—and this benefit, at least, we may attain, if we will only lay the basis of future virtue deep in humility,—if we learn, from the humbling recollections of what we have left undone, to prosecute with diligence the work that yet remains for us to do; if, from the solemn conviction that we have *not* attained, we learn, like the great apostle, 'forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, to press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' Such, I believe, in my inmost heart, was the state of mind of that dear friend of my youth, whose loss I, and many of those who were beloved by him, as well as by myself, lament this day. He was a man of sterling worth, the foundation of whose virtue was deeply laid in humility. He never counted himself to have attained, but, so long as the unimpaired powers of his body and mind would permit, diligently and perseveringly followed after, that he might attain. He was a man of little profession, but of faithful, earnest, modest practice. With untiring zeal to serve his God, to promote the cause of truth and righteousness, to tread in the footsteps of his

Saviour, and benefit and bless his fellow-men, he laboured, while he could, in the field of duty: and when, at length, his strength failed him, and he was obliged to resign to others, the post that he had occupied so long, and so faithfully, and with zeal so earnest, and yet so unobtrusive,—it was his unfeigned humility, I verily believe, and the fear lest he should be found unequal to those lesser duties, which it was the first wish of his heart to discharge satisfactorily to his Saviour and his God, that combined, with the failing powers of his body, to disable him from all further work and responsibility. For *his* sake, let us rejoice, that he is now an inhabitant of that world which flesh and blood cannot inherit, and in which the frailties of the body will no longer weaken or disturb the energies of the immortal soul, but where he shall press on unimpeded towards the goal, 'for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' For that world, let us, my friends, labour diligently to prepare ourselves, anticipating there a blissful reunion with the wise and the good who have gone before us. Amen."

Within little more than two months, my father followed the friend whom he had so dearly loved.

Many valued and beloved friends my father had in every place where he had lived. Amongst his own private friends, two or three members of his former congregation in Leeds, were those to whom, perhaps, he was most deeply attached. Among his fellow-students at college, in his younger days, and through life his brethren in the ministry, those (not yet mentioned) whose names stand prominent in my recollection as of

most frequent occurrence on his lips and as associated with the most lively expressions of brotherly regard, were the Rev. Joseph Ashton, and the Rev. George Kenrick. I should add, that for the Rev. James Tayler, of Nottingham, (father of the Rev. J. J. Tayler, of Manchester New College, London) now long deceased, but once his colleague in the pulpit of the High Pavement Chapel, he always expressed feelings of the most grateful affection and filial reverence.

Such is a very imperfect sketch, a most meagre and ineffectual memorial, of him of whose visible image and fine untraceable spirit, no language can supply a true conception, to those who had no knowledge of him, while no description will be needed to revive his bright and benignant face, for those who knew and loved him. Heartily must they already have responded to the following true and expressive words of his beloved and highly valued friend, the Rev. J. J. Tayler:—"We can ill spare such a man. This age of ours is full of bustle and pretension; there is a striving, everywhere, after notoriety and distinction, and none seem satisfied to remain where Providence has placed them. From the dust, and heat, and glare, of the crowded highways of the world, it is delightful to turn to the refreshing image of a life beautiful from its very quietness and simplicity, wise and strong in all the essentials of human existence, through trust in God, and fidelity to conviction, and ever happy, with no extraordinary measure of outward prosperity, in the unanxious enjoyment of blessings daily renewed, and the habitual forgetfulness of self."

This is expressive language, but it cannot portray the specific beauty of character and countenance, that, throughout these few pages, I have been attempting to recall; yet to little purpose; for nothing in this volume, nothing I have said, or could have said, not even the sermons themselves, nor the likeness prefixed, invaluable as it is to all who saw my father much during his latter years, can give any adequate impression of the grateful and happy influence which he shed over most who knew, and all who loved him. This volume will indeed represent something far more precious than anything which it itself contains, to a few,—to the wife and children, and intimate friends, who carry ever with them permanent sources of joy which he had awakened or multiplied in their hearts; but to others, who have no such store of living associations with its language, thought, and expression, it will necessarily recall but the very faintest shadow of that bright and venerable countenance which they will see no more.

J. H. H.

January 26th, 1861.

Lingering, still loath to find my duty done,
  Thirsting thy life's pure essence to distil,
To make men feel again the gladdening sun
  That from thy spirit shone,—nay, shineth still;
The sun of innocence retained,—till youth
  Passed into age, yet seemed a youth more fair;
Richer in honour, wisdom, love, and truth,
  A heavenly childhood crowned with silvery hair;—
Thy glad look met me o'er the printed page,
  Thy voice I heard calming my troubled will;
I prayed a blessing of thy hallowed age,
  And felt thy radiant love was quickening still:
That look, voice, love, shall outlive all earth's years,
But the dumb book,—I close it wet with tears.

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SERMONS.

I.

THE MERRY HEART.

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"A MERRY HEART DOETH GOOD LIKE A MEDICINE."

To inculcate upon the young the duty of cultivating a cheerful spirit, will appear to many, perhaps, a superfluous task. Increasing years, I shall be told, may bring seriousness and gloom with them, but children and youth are almost always gay. There is no exception, in the case of man, to the general rule, that the young of all animals are playful. Happily it *is* so, for the most part; and God forbid that it should be otherwise! In the cloudless morning of life we gather strength, from the sunshine and the breeze, for the storms that are to follow. We sport merrily and freely on the green turf and beneath the blue sky; and our bodily and mental powers are gradually developed and strengthened for the performance of tasks, to which, in their infant state, they

would be unequal. Time enough for the clouds of care to gather, when the limbs are knit and the manly chest expanded, and the whole frame so enlarged in its proportions as to be able to bear up against the pelting of the storm.

Not in childhood or in early youth should we wish to see too great a demand made, either upon the active or the passive powers. The Saviour himself entered not upon his arduous mission till his body and mind were fully matured. It was not till he began to be about thirty years of age, that he was sent into the world to do his mighty deeds and suffer his severe sufferings. In a peaceful home his early years were passed, and though we know that his hours of childhood and youth were far from being hours of idleness, but that, on the contrary, he very soon began to occupy himself in preparation for the great business of his after-life, yet may we reasonably conjecture that the innocent pleasures of life's early dawn were his. "The innocent are gay," says the poet Cowper; and who can doubt that cheerfulness reigned in the heart, and smiles played upon the countenance of God's own sinless child? Too thoughtful, it may be, for frequent mirth,—I cannot but picture him to myself, nevertheless, as habitually cheerful; not less willing to rejoice with those that rejoiced, than to weep with those that wept; and anxious, if possible, even when he sympathized with sorrow most deeply, to cause smiles to gleam through tears,—to awaken recollections of the past, and hopes of future happiness,—to cast the rainbow upon the cloud! From the calm and serene manner of Jesus, it seems to me natural to

infer that his childhood and youth were cheerful,—as it is desirable surely that they should always be.

Better far in childhood is thoughtlessness than gloom. Anxieties and cares imposed on the young mind destroy its vigour and elasticity, and portend premature decay. The old head upon young shoulders is not likely to rest upon them long. There can scarcely, in my mind, be a more painful sight than that of an anxious-minded, care-worn child, bowed down, before his flexible limbs have acquired firmness, beneath burdens fit only for the backs of older men. God gave children parents that they might not care, but be cared for, in their earlier years; and that their powers of body and mind, undepressed by the heavy weight of self-provision, might freely and vigorously shoot up and expand. "Alas!" says the poet,—

> "Regardless of their doom
> The little victims play;
> No thought have they of ills to come,
> No cares beyond to-day!"

He need not have said "alas!" It is because they *are* regardless of their doom now, that they will have strength to meet it hereafter; it is because the "ills to come" are hidden from them, that they will acquire vigour to acquit themselves like men when they arrive; it is because they have "no cares beyond to-day," that they will not be overwhelmed by the many that the future has in store for them.

It is natural, then, I gladly admit, for the young to be cheerful; and to exhort them to be so, is, for the most part, as needless as, in the few instances in which

it might seem necessary, it would, in all probability, prove ineffectual. The cheerless, gloomy child is so, we may reasonably suppose, in almost every case, from causes over which mere advice is not likely to have any power,—from disease of the body, which must be removed, or from surrounding influences of a painful nature, which must cease to operate, before cheerfulness, which is the natural tone of the young and healthy mind, can be restored. Take off the heavy weight, and the depression will cease. Restore health, bring back the happy circumstances, surround the youthful spirit with an atmosphere of domestic and social comfort, and there is little doubt but that the cheerfulness, which sickness or sorrow may have banished for a season, will speedily return.

Wonderful is the elasticity of the young mind; not easily to be repressed its joyous propensities. Often has "the merry heart, which doeth good like a medicine," been known to bear up against the languor of disease, the hardship of poverty, yea, even the tyranny of unkindness. Often has the tiny, half-starved, emaciated child,—dragged up, not brought up; seldom soothed with kind looks or kisses; frequently irritated with angry words or brutal blows—manifested, in the intervals of its sufferings, a degree of cheerfulness, nay, even of mirth and gaiety, that may well surprise us, when we think of the counteracting influences with which it has struggled, and with which, at a later age, notwithstanding the increase of both outward and inward strength, it would have struggled in vain.

Cheerfulness,—thanks to the mercy of Him who

watches over His children at every period of their course, and looks down with an eye of equal kindness on the gay gambols of childhood, the active sports of youth, the thoughtful counsels or useful labours of maturity, and the dignified repose of old age,—cheerfulness, I know, is natural to the young. "The merry heart, that doeth good like a medicine," seldom fails to beat in youthful bosoms; and if this pleasant springtime of life were to continue always,—if, in addressing the young, I was not also addressing those who are destined to become old, I know not that I should have deemed it otherwise than superfluous to dwell upon my present subject, and to urge upon my young friends, the duty of cultivating and cherishing that cheerful spirit, which, with few exceptions, I doubt not that they already possess.

But to childhood and youth, age will succeed, and will bring with it, beyond a doubt, not a few dark thoughts, perplexing doubts, distressing anxieties, and heavy cares. However blue and bright the morning sky, clouds will gather over it, certainly before evening, probably before mid-day. For this event I wish those that hear me to be prepared. I would that, by reflexion and voluntary effort, they should convert into a principle and a habit, that cheerfulness of spirit, which, at the outset of life, seems to be instinctive. At no period of their course will they find it without its use.

To the man as to the child, the merry heart will do good like a medicine. The health of the body, as the wise man seems to intimate by his comparison, will be materially promoted by it. The man of a cheerful

spirit—especially if he be of a thoughtful and sympathetic nature, and endowed with a quick perception of what is due to others' feelings as well as his own—is a blessing to all around him, teaching them by his friendly counsels, animating them by his bright example, and assisting them by his fraternal efforts, to take up their various burdens, and, as pilgrims that beguile their journey with pleasant conversation and snatches of sweet song, to go rejoicing on their way together. To the darkened dwellings of sorrow and care such a man comes as a sunbeam, warm and bright yet not too dazzling, for he knows how to temper his cheerfulness with sympathy, and is not one of those who sing unseasonable "songs to them that are of a heavy heart."

Cheerful persons there are indeed who forget this, and often make their cheerfulness of none effect, or positively painful, by their want of that delicate tact which would teach them how to adapt its expression to the state of the mind which it is their wish to cheer. But where this is not the case,—where the cheerful heart is also tender and sympathetic, and the disposition to make light of its own miseries and misfortunes is combined with a readiness to enter into and to feel for those of other men,—how efficacious is its work of love, and with what a grace is the performance of it attended! The philosopher who expects all others to be as philosophical as himself, and holds them up to derision and contempt when they are not so, will do little to reform the world, in comparison with him who compassionates the errors, and pities the ignorance,

which he rejoices to have it in his power to remove; and so the cheerful person who can make kind allowance for the gloom of the sufferer, without being infected by it, and can condescend to pour balm upon the wounds, which, were they his own, he would think too slight and trifling to notice, will succeed far better in diffusing around him a cheerful spirit, than he who laughs at all the griefs that he does not feel, and dismisses the petty miseries of others with the same indifference that he does his own.

Beautiful, indeed, is the union of cheerfulness and sympathy;—the union of a calm and sweet composure under personal suffering and inconvenience, with a benevolent earnestness to assuage and mitigate, and, if possible, remove, all the ills, however trifling, which other men endure. The man or woman who combines these qualities, moves, a ministering angel, through the world, not only teaching others, by example, how they should endure life's various trials, but lending them that gentle aid, in the first instance, without which they might find it impossible to learn the lesson. Be yours, my young friends, not only now, but throughout life, the kindly, cheerful spirit, the bright eye that can smile through tears, the merry heart that melts nevertheless at others' woes, and cannot fail, therefore, wherever its genial influence is felt, to do good like a medicine. That cheerfulness, believe me, in which many, if not all of you, now rejoice, is well worth preserving; combined, as you may combine it, with the active spirit of benevolence, it will do more than many qualities of far greater brilliancy in the world's estimate, to promote your useful-

ness, and render you real blessings to your species. He who in private life is at once cheerful and benevolent, is sure to make some considerable addition, in his day, to the sum of human happiness.

But how, I shall perhaps be asked, is that cheerfulness, which seems almost instinctive in the young, to be preserved amidst the thickening, darkening cares of human life. It cannot be denied that the task is far from being an easy one, and that in all cases, except those few in which the natural temperament is peculiarly favourable to its execution, no small amount of thought and effort, of pious meditation and vigorous self-command, will be required for its accomplishment. He who has undergone many trials and many sorrows, and yet retained his cheerfulness through them all, if he owes not his equanimity, as some men do, to mere constitution, deserves high praise for his practical philosophy. He has doubtless reflected much, and put forth powerful efforts to subdue or regulate the painful feelings that must often have been excited within him; and we may reasonably conjecture that religion also has lent soothing and strengthening aid to cheer and invigorate his mind. Gladly would I teach you, my young friends, if I could, how to carry with you, through life, the spirit of cheerfulness, "the merry heart" that will "do good like a medicine," not to yourselves alone, but to the members of your several households, to all those with whom it will be your lot to associate hereafter on terms of intimacy. One or two brief and simple rules I will endeavour, with an earnest wish that you may find them profitable, to lay down.

And in the first place, if you would retain your cheerfulness, let it be your most anxious and earnest endeavour to retain your innocence; with every particle that you lose of this, a portion of your cheerfulness will go. Well has the poet said that "the innocent are gay;" the blameless, virtuous, and pious heart, is the heart of which the wise man speaks in our text,—"the merry heart that doeth good like a medicine"—that "hath a continual feast" in the thoughts and feelings that nourish and support it. I know, indeed, that there is a mirth the end of which is heaviness,—a laughter, during the very loudest bursts of which, the heart is sorrowful, a mirth and a laughter which are soon over, like the "crackling of thorns under a pot," and to which sorrow and remorse are sure to succeed;—such are those which accompany the drunken revels of sin; but very different are they from those really joyous feelings which "do good like a medicine," which are sweet while they continue to leave sweetness behind them, which cheer the heart that feels, and communicate their cheering influence to all other hearts in communion with it. If you would continue to be gay, my young friends, and to make those around you gay, be innocent, be virtuous. Every cherished sin, every evil practice wilfully persevered in, every evil desire wilfully indulged, you may rest assured will not only diminish your own enjoyment, but impair your power of adding to the enjoyment of your associates and friends.

Again, if you would retain your cheerful spirit, let me earnestly exhort you, my young friends, not to be too anxious for the good opinion of those around you,

your associates; but when you know what is right, where you have good and sufficient reason to believe that duty points the path of action, that conscience sanctions, that God approves, pass onward fearlessly, and be not solicitous to mark or to inquire who smiles or frowns. Where this is not the case, however, where conscience does not clearly tell you what is right, consult the counsels of higher wisdom; go to older and more experienced friends for advice, to parents and instructors, rather than to brethren and playmates. Be not like that young king "who forsook the counsel which the older men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him." Disappointment and dejection will be the sure lot of him, who endeavours so to act that all may think well of him. If we would stand acquitted to ourselves, (and who can be happy who does not so?) we must often rest satisfied to find even those we love best, and whose approbation we are most anxious to secure, against us. Where there is not independence of mind and action, firmness to act rightly where we see clearly, and to abide by the best and surest judgment where we cannot trust our own, there can be no consistency, and therefore no cheerfulness;—for on almost all points on which difference of judgment is possible, it will be found to prevail extensively, and he whose object it is to please all, therefore, will be in a state of constant fluctuation, and in all probability, therefore, please none.

Finally, my young friends, my last rule and my best rule for the preservation of cheerfulness, is to repose

confidence in your Heavenly Father as the disposer of your lot, and to seek His approval as the end of all your actions. Under His guidance nothing can happen amiss, for He does all things wisely and well, and to them that love Him and keep his commandments, He causes all things to work together for good. Nor can we have much difficulty in ascertaining at any time that line of action which He would wish us to pursue. We have only to see to it, in every instance, that our own consciences approve; and we need not then doubt that we have His approval. "Do the best you can according to your knowledge and ability," is His rule, "and I will not blame; but if there *be,* as in many instances there doubtless *will,* a better way, I will show it you hereafter."

Truly the service of God is freedom, is cheerfulness, is joy. Forsake Him not, my children, and he will not forsake you. Remember *Him* in the days of your youth, and He will not forget *you* in the days of your old age. Walk with Him, and, in His companionship, you shall go on your way, rejoicing to the last. The weight of years may bow your backs, but it shall leave your hearts untouched. Your cheerful spirits shall remain unsaddened by the cares of life;—to its latest hour, "the merry heart that doeth good like a medicine" shall be yours.

II.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE DEEPEST SOURCE OF MAN'S HAPPINESS AND PEACE.

Acts xvii. 27.

"THAT THEY SHOULD SEEK THE LORD, IF HAPLY THEY MIGHT FEEL AFTER HIM AND FIND HIM, THOUGH HE BE NOT FAR FROM EVERY ONE OF US."

The Apostle, in this passage, expressly assures us, that it was not more certainly the object of God, in our creation, that we should dwell on the face of the earth to replenish and subdue it, than that we should seek after Himself. "He hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth." He hath made them also to "seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him." To draw near in thought to the common Father, to see with the *spiritual*, Him whom we cannot discern with the *bodily* eye, is not less our duty, than to live together as brethren. The Apostle intimates indeed, that, without a mental effort, this purpose cannot be accomplished; that God must be sought and felt after by those who would find Him; that though He is not far from any one of us, though we live and move and have our being in Him, He may nevertheless remain unseen by us, if it be not our will to see Him.

To live without God in the world is far from being impossible;—many do so; to live "as seeing Him who is invisible" is the glory and the happiness of the wisest and best of His children. Happy they who remember and forget not the constant presence of God with them, who have fully realized the thought ascribed, by the sublimest of ancient poets, to the patriarch Job, "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him; but He knoweth the way I take." Happy they whose spirits have made diligent search, and not in vain, after Him, Whom, with the eye of sense, "no man has seen or can see;" who can rejoice with the Psalmist to think of God as an encompassing and besetting God, from Whose spirit they cannot go, from Whose presence they cannot flee, who, not with fear, not with irksomeness, but with joy and exultation can exclaim, "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me, Thou knowest my down sitting and mine up rising; Thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me; such knowledge is too wonderful for me,—it is high, I cannot attain unto it." Happy they, I repeat it, who, with the faith of the understanding and the heart, can thus express themselves.

Wherein, let me proceed to inquire, does their happi-

ness consist? And in the first place, I would observe, they are happy in the knowledge which they possess, or think that they possess, of the Author of their happiness. Amongst the very best of the good gifts that our God has given us to be grateful for, is our gratitude itself. Who that has a heart, and that has ever been the object of his fellow-beings' love and kindness, will deny this? While enjoying the good gifts that have flowed to us from human sources, which of us has not often felt that the gift itself, though good, was nothing compared with the knowledge of the source from which it flowed; that the kindly feeling of the offerer was far more to us than the offering; and that the response of our own hearts to the movement of his, was a higher and sweeter pleasure, than any that his bounty itself could confer? "My son," says the wise son of Sirach, "blemish not thy good deeds, neither use uncomfortable words when thou givest anything. Shall not the dew assuage the heat? So is a word better than a gift."

Truly a word, or even less than a word, a look, if it be the genuine expression of love dwelling in the heart, can make even a trifle precious, and has often been known to impart, even to a costly gift, the largest portion of its value. Is not this our experience in our intercourse with our fellow-men? Do we not find that, whenever we can trace the bounties that they confer to the benevolence that they feel, those bounties become additionally precious to us? Why should it be otherwise in our relation to God? Why should we not be able, when offering up the thanksgivings of our hearts to Him, to employ with truth the language of poetry,—

"Each blessing to our souls more dear,
Because conferred by Thee."

If we, and those whom we love, and multitudes of beings with whom we sympathize, or for whom we feel in a greater or less degree,—man, beast, bird, fish, insect, are happy; if the world, so far as our experience goes, is full of happiness, and if, after all the abatements that may, or must, be made, for pain and sorrow, we are constrained to confess that pleasure and enjoyment largely predominate; if the sentiment of the poet finds a clear echo in our breasts—

"All, all exist in love: Love is a sea
Filling all the abysses dim
Of boundless space, in whose deeps regally
Suns and their bright broods swim.
. . . . . .
The world is very lovely. Oh, my God!
I thank Thee that I live;"

if it be, in very truth, our conviction, that existence is on the whole a blessing,—a precious blessing to ourselves, and to all the reasonable, nay more, to all the sentient beings that surround us,—is it not most natural that we should feel anxious to realize to ourselves, the presence of the Author of all this happiness; that we should "seek Him, if haply we may feel after Him and find Him"? Once found, every blessing that He bestows will be doubly precious,—precious for His sake as well as for its own,—for the love that it manifests in Him, as well as the good that it ministers to us; precious because a Father gives it, not less than because we find it beneficial to us, when given.

Will any one tell me that it makes no difference in

the sum of my enjoyment, whether I conceive my blessings to proceed from chance, or fate, or law, or any other impersonal thing, or whether I trace them to the conscious mind of an intelligent and moral Being, that knows and loves me, and wills all the happiness that He bestows? I would ask that person whether he would be as well pleased to find the materials of his happiness, for which he is now indebted to the free bounty and tender love of parents, brethren, friends, and fellow-men, lying ready for him, whenever wanted, on the pathway of life, left there by some inscrutable chance or fatality or law, to be traced, wonderful to say, to no law-maker? Would he partake with equal relish, think you, of provisions of which he saw not the provider? Would he sit down to the feast, or rise up from it, as well pleased as if he had found some one presiding at the board, to whom he could express the gratitude he felt? Even if no such person appeared, would not his imagination busy itself in picturing him, deeming the benefit but half a benefit till the benefactor was discovered, and the tribute of the grateful heart poured out before him?

> "Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
> From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?
> Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows?
> Whose seats the weary traveller repose?
> Who taught that heaven-directed spire to rise?"

Questions such as these we always ask, when, in our journeyings through life, we recognize, or conjecture, the workings of human benevolence; and our enjoyment is not full till they are answered. Can it be a matter of

indifference, then, to us to ascertain, whether the bounties of prodigal Nature, so liberally poured forth around us, are indeed bounties; whether the Nature we speak of is bountiful in reality, or bountiful only by a figure of speech; whether Nature is in truth but another name for the Eternal Creative Mind, for Him who is love and dwelleth in love; or whether we are to regard it, on the contrary, as nothing more than the necessary order of appearances and events unfolding itself from all eternity, without the motive power of benevolence, the legislative power of wisdom, or the executive power of will, simply because it *must?* Strangely constituted, I cannot but think, must that mind be, that can regard it as a matter of indifference, which side of this alternative it embraces.

In a living and loving God we have a heightener of every joy,—a Father, by our gratitude to Whom, every gift that He bestows is rendered doubly precious. Not only our joy in the past and the present, He is our confidence for the future. Not only is every blessing that we possess enhanced by our belief that it proceeds from Him Who loves us, and Whom we cannot therefore think of without answering love; but, in this belief, we have our sole sufficient ground of hope and trust, that what we enjoy now, we shall continue to enjoy, so long as it is desirable for us to do so; that no gift of value will be withdrawn without good and sufficient cause, or without being replaced (unless we have ourselves deserved the forfeiture, in which case the loss itself will be our gain) by something as good at least, if not better.

In the Eternal Father's love the future is not less

secure than the present. He not only gives us what we have, but He ensures it to us so long as it is good for us to have it; and who can reasonably wish to have it longer? The abused gift He may withdraw, but the withdrawal in that case is, in truth, the very blessing that we need. For the well-used gift He may substitute some other, in itself not less valuable, and in the circumstances of the case (to Him best known) more desirable for us. Shall we complain on that account? Shall we not rather, if we are wise, feel grateful to Him for the exchange? *A paternal God is an eternal fountain of good to every child.* His blessings may take various forms, and that of chastisement may sometimes be one of them; but they will be blessings still, and reliance upon Him for the future, is, obviously, not less reasonable than gratitude for the past. If there be a God, and that God is love, what have those who faithfully serve Him and put their trust in Him, to fear? With such a protector and friend, may they not well ask, "Who can harm us so long as we are followers of that which is good?"

And even for His erring children, what ground of consolation and hope—what cogent and persuasive motives to repentance must there be, in the thought,—He is our Father; *we* have deserted *Him, He* has not banished *us*. Even in His darkest frowns there has always been love; in His severest chastisements, mercy; not only does He invite us to return, but He offers to aid us in returning. No sooner shall He see us on our homeward way, than He will come forth to meet us, and when we stand beneath His roof once more, He, and, by his in-

junction, every member of His household, will rejoice over the lost one found, over the dead brought to life again.

Surely, my friends, in such a God we have One to trust in, as well as to be grateful to; a security for our future, as well as a heightener of our present happiness. That *love* is to be relied upon, we know from our own consciousness, as well as from our early and never-failing experience of those around us; but who could rely upon chance or fate,—or even law, unless indeed he knew and trusted the law-maker, in which case he too, like ourselves, would have a personal God to trust in? Oh, my friends, if we would not be without any reasonable or steadfast ground of hope for the future, "let us seek the Lord, if haply we may feel after Him and find Him." Succeeding in our search, we may give every anxious care to the winds; the blessings which a Father has given, we may trust to a Father to preserve to us.

Once more, I would observe, that on a personal God only, can we rely, for the future solution of all the perplexing doubts and difficulties that suggest themselves when we look around us in the world. How obvious is it, that we are, as yet, only in the infancy of our intellectual being,—intelligent enough to discover numberless difficulties, which, nevertheless, we have not intelligence to solve;—intelligent enough to contemplate, with intense interest and curiosity, the "mighty maze" of phenomena and events,—to discover many and strong indications that it is "not without a plan,"—and to desire earnestly to ascertain what that plan is, yet not sufficiently intelligent to conduct our inquiries, in more than a very few instances, to a successful issue; en-

dowed with perceptive powers, sufficiently acute to discover both concords and discords, within a narrow range, but not sufficiently wide, in their field of comprehension, to take in the general harmony?

That the physical and the moral universe—the world of matter and the world of mind—are inseparably connected, and have a common origin, and that, if we were wise enough, we should clearly see their perfect adaptation to each other, who can doubt? And yet how difficult, how impossible do we constantly find it, to harmonize their phenomena, to convince ourselves that the succession of events in the natural, is consistent with, and promotive of, the highest welfare of the spiritual world; that the laws of Nature and the ordinations of Providence, proceeding from one source, tend to one end,—the purification and exaltation of all immortal minds, the final perfection of the whole moral universe! When we see the extensive prevalence of moral disorder on every side of us, the very slow growth of knowledge and virtue in the world, the undistinguishing ravages of disease and death, smiting, with impartial hand, and consigning to the same tomb, those who best use, and those who most abuse their powers, the wise and the ignorant, the virtuous and the wicked;—when, in the language of the poet, we observe

> "How unassuming worth in secret lives
> And dies neglected; how the good man's share
> In life is gall and bitterness of soul;
> How the lone widow and her orphans pine
> In starving solitude, while luxury
> In palaces lies straining her low thought
> To form unreal wants;"

—when, I say, we mark these things, how gladly must we seek refuge in the belief, that He who permits us to see the difficulty will, in His own due time, supply us with the solution; that perplexity and sorrow shall at His bidding give way to conviction and joy; that, in the words of His Son, "what we know not now we shall know hereafter"!

It may be said, perhaps, that we ought to rest satisfied with the present assurance that the order of Nature is perfect, and that in the long-run—whether we live to see it or not—all these odds will be made even. In this assurance, doubtless, the benevolent mind must rejoice, but the very benevolence that causes it to do so, will, naturally, and I should say necessarily, induce the wish to see clearly, and understand fully, that development, in the anticipation of which so much satisfaction is felt: he, who loves God, cannot but wish to see His ways fully justified to man; he, who even looks with a reverential eye upon Nature, must desire to understand her laws, and to comprehend the perfection of their operation in the last result.

If we love our fellow-men with a discriminating love, honouring the good, and condemning, even while we grieve over the wicked, how can we help looking forward, with longing desire, to the time when a retribution, not less merciful than just, shall be awarded to them; when the good shall know, and feel, that they have done well and wisely, and that their short-lived sorrows have had their fore-ordained issue, in eternal joys; and when remorseful grief, sweet in its uses, though bitter while it lasts, shall come over the wicked, bringing home

to their hearts the wholesome conviction of their sin and folly and ingratitude, and, in doing so, gradually transform them, by the renewing of their minds, into the image of Him, against Whom they have sinned, but Whom they will sin against no more?

To him whose experience has been that of the wise man, who has seen "*under the sun* that the race is by no means always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but that time and chance happeneth to all;" to him who has been compelled—as which of us has not sometimes been?—"to consider the oppressions that are done under the sun;" "to behold the tears of such as were oppressed," and to see, that, "on the side of their oppressors there was power, but that *they* had no comforter;" to that man, I say, how consoling, how delightful is it, not only to know that there is One *above the sun* Who shall set all things right, but to believe that the time will come when he shall see, with his own eyes, the rectification of all wrongs over which he has lamented; when he shall see every yoke of sin and sorrow broken; the oppressed going free; and—more glorious and delightful still, inasmuch as it will be a work of grace, of more arduous accomplishment,—the oppressor prostrate and penitent before the Father Whom he has offended, and not ashamed to entreat the forgiveness of the brother whom he has injured. Blessed anticipation! Who that has witnessed or heard of the countless ills that flesh is heir to, but must wish to see their cure?

But if there be no personal God to understand our doubts and perplexities, how vainly must we hope for their solution! If there be no God of mercy and of love, to sympathize with us in our indignation against wrong-doing, and in our earnest desire to witness the final triumph of virtue and happiness over sin and misery, what sufficient ground have we for anticipating so joyful a result? In the faith that "there is a God, and that He is *Love*," we have our sole security for the final rectification of all wrongs, and the ultimate and eternal well-being of all those whom He has created in His own image. Diligently, then, let us "seek the Lord, if haply we may feel after Him, and find Him." To Him we may be grateful for the past. In Him we may be trustful for the future. In His paternal wisdom and mercy we may place our confidence, for the final removal of every doubt, chastisement of every sin, and cultivation of every virtue.

III.

PURE AND EARNEST WORSHIP.

JAMES I. 27.

"PURE RELIGION AND UNDEFILED BEFORE GOD, EVEN THE FATHER, IS THIS, TO VISIT THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS IN THEIR AFFLICTION, AND TO KEEP ONESELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD."

IT is not of the inward principle which should incite us to the performance of all the duties that we owe to God, that the Apostle speaks in our text, but of the outward manifestation of that principle. It is not religion that he undertakes to define, but worship, and the original term ought to have been thus translated: "Pure worship and undefiled before God, even the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." In other words, no outward service can we possibly render to the God and Father of all, so pure and holy in itself, or so sure to prove acceptable to Him, as the faithful discharge of our social and personal duties, as the promotion of the welfare of our brethren of His family, and the preservation of our own moral purity, unstained by the temptations of the world. The sentiment of the Apostle is no other than that to which the prophet Isaiah had long before given utterance. "Bring no more vain

oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear you: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Our text is but a condensed expression of the sentiments contained in this striking passage. It does not assert, as a hasty reader of our common version might suppose, that religion is nothing more than what is generally called morality,—that we owe to God no peculiar duties,—and that to acquit ourselves of the obligations under which we lie to ourselves and our fellow-men, is all that our heavenly Father requires of us. This is not true, nor does the Apostle assert that it is so. On the contrary, his words imply that we are to do good to our fellow-men, and to keep ourselves pure from sin, in token of our love to God; that our beneficence and self-government are to have their source in piety, I say not solely and exclusively, but in part at least; that, if we are truly devout, they will form a portion, and that too the most important and acceptable portion, of our worship.

The prophet Isaiah, in the passage which I have quoted from him, seems, at first view, to throw contempt on all outward worship, on all direct acts of homage to the Deity; but we know well that this could not be his meaning. The oblations and the incense which he represents Jehovah as rejecting with disgust, he could not, as a devout Jew, be ignorant that Jehovah had himself commanded his people to offer. The new moons and the sabbaths, the solemn meetings and the appointed feasts, which he describes the God of Israel as "weary to bear," as regarding not merely with indifference, but with "soul-felt hatred," it was doubtless his firm belief that that self-same God, had, by His own sacred laws, prescribed. This very prophet, indeed, had, on another occasion, pronounced those blessed who should account the sabbath "a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable," and who should "honour Him, not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words" on God's holy day.

What, then, is his meaning in the passage now under consideration? Obviously that benevolence and virtue, while they dispense not with other worship, are, themselves, the best and holiest and most costly worship, that can be offered up on the altar of Jehovah; that, without these, no outward rites and ceremonies, no observance of holy days, no bowing down in sacred places, no knee or lip homage whatever, can be of any avail. These things the prophet would have said, as our Lord said afterwards, "it might have been well for you to do, if you had not left the other, the greater things, undone; but, having left the latter undone, it is obvious that, in

your performance of the former, you have not been actuated by the genuine love of Him Who always 'prefers mercy and truth to sacrifice,'" but have been endeavouring, either to blind the eyes of conscience by a miserable subterfuge, or to impose upon your fellow-men by an act of hypocrisy. If you had washed and made yourselves clean, if you had put away the evil of your doings from the sight of God as well as man, if you had ceased to do evil and learned to do well, if you had sought judgment, relieved the oppressed, judged the fatherless, and pleaded for the widow, then might your incense and oblations have ascended acceptably to Him who sitteth on the throne; then might your new moons and your sabbaths, your feast days and your fast days, sanctified by the pure worship of the heart, have lent their aid to prepare you for the future age, when no times or places shall be set apart, because all times and places shall be equally sacred to the service of Jehovah.

Such was the meaning of the prophet, and such likewise is that of the Apostle in our text. He means to express no contempt for the direct worship of God, private or social. "Is any one among you afflicted?" he has said in this very epistle, "let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Confide your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The earnest fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." But he declares that there is a worship more acceptable to God than any direct homage to Himself,—in the absence of which, He will account all such homage worthless and vain. God is best served, he assures us, when for His sake we benefit and bless

our fellow-men, and purify and sanctify ourselves. Our praises can add nothing to His glory; our thanksgivings for His mercies to us, seeing that we can make no return in kind to Himself, will find their best expression in deeds of mercy to His children; and our efforts to be and to do good, if made in the genuine spirit of devotion and humility, will be the best and most efficacious prayers, indicating the state of our hearts far more satisfactorily, than any offerings of the lips could do.

You see, then, my friends, that piety is not left out of the account, as some might hastily conclude, in the Apostle's definition; that his doctrine is not that all religion consists in social and personal morality, but that social and personal morality are the best fruits and surest indications of religion; that we render to God the purest worship, when, for that love of Him which dwells within us, we confer upon His children those blessings which we cannot confer upon Himself, and preserve our own hearts and lives pure from that sin of which He is incapable, and which we know to be odious in His sight. Leaving all other motives to the practice of the social and personal virtues, to operate unrestricted, and produce their full effect upon us, He would constrain us by a strong, additional motive; He would teach us to regard virtue, in all its branches, as worship pure and undefiled. "Do good to your brethren," he would say, "not only because *you* love them, but because *your Father* loves them; keep yourselves pure from sin, not only for your own sake, but also because it is your Father's will. As you love

God, be benevolent to men; as you desire His favour and approbation, watch over your own purity."

Such is the Apostle's doctrine; far from dispensing with piety, he recommends that our benevolence and self-government should seek for their very best and strongest motives in it, that our virtue should always have the character of worship, that we should do every good thing not only for its own sake, but for the love of God. "For the love of God, grant me that which I need," has often been the appeal of the child of misfortune, and the Apostle sanctions and enforces it when he tells us, that, to listen to that appeal, is to offer worship pure and undefiled.

As there are some who would gladly substitute piety for virtue; spending their days in devout indolence; meditating when they ought to act; dreaming of the virtuous deeds of which they ought to be the wakeful and diligent performers; praying to God to bestow upon their fellow-men those blessings of which they themselves might, if they would, be the active dispensers; saying, "Thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," when they might, by deeds more potent far than words, help to extend God's kingdom and to do God's will; allowing their bent knees and uplifted hands to grow stiff in prayer, when they ought to be up and doing, and putting forth all their energies, both of mind and of body, to lay hold upon, and secure, the blessings that they pray for:—so, on the other hand, there are not a few—and those, too, some of them, in many respects excellent persons—who seem to think that piety, if it be *possible*, in this busy,

bustling world of ours, is at least a work of supererogation; that the things which are seen and temporal must necessarily take precedence, in the estimation of beings constituted as we are, of those which are unseen and eternal; that, provided that the brother, whom we see in the flesh, is truly loved and cared for by us, the Father, whom we have discovered only by the spirit, may, for the present at least, be pardonably forgotten; and that, though the enthusiastic and imaginative may, perhaps, be excused, for occupying their thoughts and feelings about the great Invisible, and the relation in which his creatures stand to Him, yet that it is the part of common sense, and of those who act upon its dictates, to attend chiefly, if not exclusively, to the affairs of daily life, the interests of the scene that is passing before our eyes, the proper business, as they would term it, of the ball we live on—our secular interests, our secular duties.

Thus do many—forgetful of their highest dignity as rational and immortal beings, suppressing, at the bidding of what they call common sense (common indeed it is, and coarse as common), the sublimest aspirations of their spiritual nature,—yielding, I cannot but suspect, in some cases, to that mental indolence, which finds it easier to limit its observations to the present and the visible, than to realize the future and invisible by thought,—live without God in the world, and though, perhaps, not unmindful of the duties which virtue imposes, banish religion almost wholly from their thoughts. In thus acting, I doubt not that they are often influenced, in part, by the strong and not un-

natural disgust, that the bigotry and intolerance, the cant and hypocrisy, of religious *professors*—rightly so denominated, inasmuch as their religion is no inward reality, but a mere outward *profession*—excite in their minds.

Be the cause, however, what it may, the effect is deeply to be lamented. Without religion, there is little hope that virtue itself will attain to its highest perfection, or preserve unshaken stability, and it is much to be feared, that he who deliberately transgresses what Jesus Christ has proclaimed to be the first and great commandment, will not long deserve the credit of a faithful obedience to the second, which is like unto it. In the discharge of our duty to our fellow-men, we shall all of us, sooner or later, meet with dangers and difficulties, trials and temptations, which the love of God alone—that love which casts out all fear—can enable us to meet and to subdue.

In the absence of strong temptations, men wholly destitute of religious feeling, have, doubtless, been able to maintain a fair, and, in some instances perhaps, even a high reputation for virtue; but in opposition to and defiance of such, it may well be questioned whether any man has ever been able to preserve his virtue long, who has not hoped-for, and found it in, a stronger than himself. The strongest men have been "strong in the Lord," and the mightiest of moral heroes have been those, who, in their hour of trial, have not been ashamed to say, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I; for Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in Thy tabernacle for

ever; I will trust in the covert of Thy wings." Virtue may doubtless exist, in an imperfect degree, without religion, but religion, as our text implies, harmonizing in this respect with the general strain of Christian doctrine, is absolutely essential to the perfection of virtue.

I dwell, with the more earnestness, on this view of the subject, as it has been, not unfrequently, said, that "morality is upheld" by those who have adopted our peculiar views of religious truth, "to the disparagement of religion." "Unitarianism," it has been said by a Unitarian, "as it actually displays itself, is *deficient in the possession and manifestation of a religious spirit.* It would be invidious," he adds, "to dwell upon the forms in which this deficiency manifests itself. It is, indeed, too obvious, to require special illustration, that, as to devotional habits and religious communion, Unitarians display less zeal than most other classes of Christians. For this difference, apologies may be offered, which have in them some force of truth. There is, however, another fact to which no such apologies will apply; we allude to the comparatively small interest which is taken by Unitarians in strictly religious subjects, and the distaste which is, consequently, felt amongst them, to what is decided and earnest in the administration of religion."

How far this writer's observations, evidently made in no unfriendly spirit, are supported by facts, it is not my intention to inquire; I will merely observe, that, for one who is no searcher of hearts, there cannot, perhaps, be a more difficult task, than to take a just measure of the depth and sincerity of the religious feelings of his fellowmen; especially is this difficult in the case of those, and

there are many such, who regard these feelings as peculiarly sacred, and who act scrupulously upon the Saviour's injunctions, to keep the door of the closet shut when they pray, and to be of a cheerful countenance when they fast. That such scrupulosity may be, and sometimes is, carried to excess,—that, from an undue fear of apparent or imputed ostentation, men sometimes forbear to speak out of the abundance of their hearts, when they not only might, but ought to do so,—that, in their desire not to lay themselves open to the imputation of doing their good deeds "to be seen of men," they occasionally forget, that, to "let their light shine before men" is also a duty which Christ himself has prescribed as one not to be neglected in its proper season, I readily admit. A morbid fear of seeming *better*, doubtless leads some men to seem *worse* than they are. In their hatred or dread of cant and hypocrisy, they lay themselves open to the charge of an indifference that they do not feel.

Unquestionably that is wrong; but even where there is no excess of this kind, the feelings of the pious heart are those with which the stranger will, comparatively seldom, be suffered to intermeddle by the sincere religionist. While he will take care that religion shall bear fruit in his holy and virtuous practice, its direct expression he will regard, for the most part, as an affair between himself and his God. I would fain hope, therefore, that this author may be wrong in arguing from the comparative paucity of the direct outward manifestations of religion amongst Unitarians, to a corresponding deficiency in the inward principle and spirit. If indeed he is right in ascribing to them, as he does, a more than usually

"strict integrity and enlarged benevolence," it may well be questioned whether these could exist, in any degree of perfection, without the strengthening and exalting influence of the religious principle. I hope and trust that it is not so.

Not to dwell however upon the question "what we are," a question which our vanity and self-ignorance might possibly lead us to answer wrongly, let us rather inquire what we ought to be; and assuredly, if we do so with a sincere wish to arrive at the truth, we shall come to the conclusion that if those who have preferred the accusation have not erred in their opinion of us, we ourselves must be most lamentably in error, and that our virtue must be small and weak indeed, if it has not a religious basis to support it. Unitarians we may be, but Unitarian Christians, worthy of the name, we cannot be, without *religion*. In our estimate of Christian duty, to forget the first and great commandment, would surely be, of all errors the most fatal. May I not safely add, that it would be absolutely impossible for any disciple of Christ, who had either listened to the precepts or marked the example of his master, to commit it otherwise than wilfully? Clearly are we taught in the Gospel, (if we do not understand it, the fault must be our own,) that religion comprehends our duties both to God and man; that religious motives are needful to purify and strengthen our morality; that, as our text implies, our very morality ought to be worship. "Pure worship and undefiled before God, even the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

A religion, such as those to whom I have referred seem to think that we have embraced,—a religion which, as it has been expressed, upholds morality to the disparagement of piety, would in truth be no religion at all. A direct reference to God is implied in the very term religion, and duties performed exclusively from benevolent or prudential motives, however obligatory and important, could claim no religious character. That there are many respectable persons in the world, respectable not only from the correctness of their outward conduct, but also from the amiability of their dispositions and the moral purity of their motives, who, nevertheless, cannot be said to be religious, who take no pains to realize to themselves the idea of God, or to conform their actions to His will, is an unquestionable fact; such may be found outwardly connected, it is to be feared, with all sects, and, doubtless, with our own amongst the number; —but they are not in truth religionists of any. They are, to a certain extent, good moral characters, and it is well that they are so; but the purifying, strengthening, exalting influence of religion they still need, and till they come under its operation, their morality itself, though good so far as it goes, will be a comparatively poor and meagre thing. Not till our benevolence and self-government become worship, not till the love of God mingles with and sanctifies them, will they attain the perfection of which they are capable. When we shall love our fellow-men, not only for their own sake, but for the sake of Him Whom we love as our Father and recognize as theirs, then will our benevolence be indeed warm and comprehensive.

When we regard our private conduct, not only as a matter of prudential consideration to ourselves, but as one in which a Father, Who is most dear to us, and Who sees us always, takes a deep paternal interest, then truly shall we watch over it with care that no spot or stain may meet, to offend, His paternal eye. It is pure worship, says the Apostle, when, for God's sake, we visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction. Of course he does not mean to recommend this particular manifestation of benevolence to the exclusion of any other; he mentions it obviously as that which, at the moment, first suggests itself to his mind, from amongst a large class of actions, of the whole of which he intends it to be the symbol or representative. You cannot better testify your love of the universal Father, his meaning evidently is, than by doing good to His children according to their need, and your own ability and opportunity. The very circumstance that he had spoken of God in His character of the Father, might naturally suggest to his mind the desolate state of the fatherless, with whom he would not less naturally associate the widows; and hence, perhaps, the reason why these were selected by him, as the representatives of all those children of suffering and sorrow to whom the offices of benevolence are due. We best worship God, when for His sake we do good to His children, proportioning our bounty to the need in which they stand of it; paying our earliest visits to the most destitute and desolate; protecting those who have lost their natural protectors; standing up for those who have no others to stand up for them; in the selection of the blessings that we bestow, giving to our fellow-men

those which we have reason to think that they most need; and, in the selection of the objects of our bounty, giving first to those whom we have reason to think most in need of it.

Such is the Apostle's doctrine. But observe, my friends, that he does not stop here,—that he does not encourage the idea that we can propitiate the favour of God by benevolence alone; that, provided our social conduct is what it ought to be, we may be careless about our personal character; that, in the perverted language of Scripture, we may employ charity to hide a multitude of sins. This is a doctrine which would be acceptable to many: there are not a few who would gladly compound, by many acts of mercy and kindness, for some indulgence in wrong-doing,—who would join with hearty goodwill to benefit and bless their neighbour, if they might only be permitted to cherish their own besetting sins at the same time.

Doubtless there is egregious folly in the supposition, that a pure and holy God could ever sanction any such compact between social virtue and private vice. He who tolerates sin in himself, by the very act of doing so, it is evident, lessens his power of benefiting his species. The truly good ever are, and must be, the largest benefactors of mankind; and to cherish any sin, is, in that degree, to render ourselves both unworthy, and incapable, of acting the benefactor's part. Genuine charity may indeed cast a veil over the sins of others, and thus hide them from our view, and this is the true meaning of the Scriptural phrase, but it cannot hide our own sins either from God or from ourselves; on the contrary, if

it be genuine, it will make their criminality seem darker and more hideous to us, and will strengthen our anxiety and our efforts to cast them out.

The more benevolent we are, the more pure-minded and virtuous shall we endeavour, for our brethren's sake as well as for our own, to become. Therefore it is that God invites us to worship Him by self-government as well as by benevolence,—by purity of heart and life as well as by deeds of love and mercy to our brethren of mankind. 'As you love Me,' He says, 'watch over your own hearts, for you are My children. As you love Me, do good to your brethren, for they are My children also. In serving yourselves and each other, you will best serve Me.' "Pure worship and undefiled before God is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." Amen.

IV.

THE TRUE AMBITION.

PSALM CXIX. 6.

"THEN SHALL I NOT BE ASHAMED WHEN I HAVE RESPECT UNTO ALL THY COMMANDMENTS."

HEBREWS XII. 2.

"WHO FOR THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM ENDURED THE CROSS, DESPISING THE SHAME."

To do, with God's assistance, what we can, is all that God requires of us. He knows our powers, both physical and moral; He will proportion our task to them, and where He sees, that, without assistance, we must fail, His assistance, duly sought, will, according to His promise, be mercifully and seasonably granted. Those that come to Him, He will in no wise cast out; He will cause all things to work together for their good. As their day is, their strength shall be. When we can truly say that we have done what we could,—that our duty has been faithfully, however imperfectly, performed, according to our knowledge, power, and opportunity,—that, so far as we have understood God's commandments, we have striven to obey them,—we neither need, nor ought, to fear the censures of our fellow-beings.

We *need* not fear them. If God be for us, who shall be against us? If the searcher of hearts acquit, of what importance is it, that those, who look only on the outward appearance, condemn? The testimony of conscience is better than that of a thousand witnesses, for she can penetrate to the very bottom, to the inward springs and motives, of those actions of which they can only discern the surface aspects. What an action *appears to be* is all that they can pronounce; she knows what *it is*. And as they are incompetent to judge, so are they powerless to follow up their judgment, by any punishment that the wise and good need fear. The dungeon, the scaffold, the stake, the cross,—these, and such as these, it is true, they sometimes have at their command: but what are they? Merely means by which they send the good man, sooner, to the rest that they would fain disturb, and hasten the glory that they desire to extinguish. A temporary infamy, indeed, it is sometimes in their power to inflict, but even that is sure to prove, in the end, where good men are the sufferers, a lasting fame.

In perusing the records of his ancestry, what man, having the spirit of a man, would blush,—yea, rather, would not exult,—to read of the scaffold on which the true patriot bled, of the dungeon in which the honest confessor was immured, of the stake to which the God-fearing, man-loving martyr was bound? Wherefore was Jesus, himself, lifted up, but that he might draw all men unto him? And what was the effect of his crucifixion, but to make the very cross on which he suffered a holy thing,—to consecrate it henceforth as the sacred

symbol of human hope, surmounting the spires of our churches, pointing upwards from our tombs, raising our eyes and thoughts, whenever we behold it, to that heaven in which he, who suffered and died upon it, lives, to suffer and to die no more? Infamy! no, my friends, this is not a punishment which any good man has the slightest cause to dread. For a short season such a one may suffer from the calumnies of the wicked, or the misrepresentations of the ignorant, but there is little probability that he will do so *long*, even in this world, and, in the next, he may be certain that both his false accusers, and those who have been deluded by them, will see him as he is, and be compelled to confess, revere, and love the virtue, whose lustre the low-hanging clouds of human prejudice or malice might intercept for a season from the eyes of men, but could not forbid to shine on in that pure heaven above them, in which it shall continue to hold its bright course for ages, after they shall have melted into thin air.

"Blessed are ye," said our Lord Jesus Christ, "when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you." Nor were these the words of one who gave counsel that he could not follow; who pointed to his disciples the thornier path to heaven, but chose the smoother one himself, not "recking his own rede." No—they were the words of "the author and finisher of our faith,—who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." Not less by

his example than by his precepts hath Jesus taught us that shame is glory, when he who suffers voluntarily, incurs it rather than do that which is shameful.

It was for the very purpose, it appears to me, of teaching us this most needful and important lesson, that the great Captain of our salvation submitted to be condemned as a malefactor, and to drink of that cup, which shame had drugged with ingredients even more bitter to his taste than sufferings could infuse into it. It was for this reason, that he to whom "all power was given" calmly and unresistingly permitted himself to be pointed-at by the "slow unmoving finger," and reviled by the taunting tongue of "scorn." He wished to show us that true fame is not in the gift of the ignorant multitude; that even the discerning few cannot always bestow it; (for in that hour, we are told, his own disciples forsook him and fled, and would no longer recognize in their crucified Lord the deliverer of Israel:) but that we must often seek it, where only it is to be found, stored up, as it were, in secret for future use, in the silent approbation of conscience, and in the love and favour of that God, Who, in His own due time, will vindicate His own,—Who seeth in secret *now*, and will reward openly *hereafter*.

I think, without this lesson, the example of Christ would have been much less perfect, deficient in one of the very points in which it is most needed. Truly has the wise man observed, "The fear of man bringeth a snare."* This is the more true, because with the *fear*, the mistaken *love* of man, in cases of this kind,

* Prov. xxix. 25.

frequently co-operates. How often has the desire of approbation united with the dread of shame, to induce conduct, the rectitude of which has been inwardly doubted, if not wholly disbelieved! How often has truth been violated, and virtue outraged, and the laws of God transgressed, merely because the world would have it so, and the timid or the ambitious,—though they knew, and, had they nobly trusted to themselves, might have acted better,—could not make up their minds to face the world's censure, or to forego its praise! The friendship of the world, as we all know, is often enmity with God; the world's honour is often God's dishonour.

Well was it for us then, that the Saviour of the world died the death of a malefactor and a slave! By doing so he has taught us, in the most convincing and affecting manner, that no outward circumstances can possibly disgrace the truly good; that unmerited opprobrium, voluntarily and patiently endured, in obedience to the dictates of conscience, is, in the last result, the highest fame; that true honour stands in the approbation of God alone, which the applause of all good men, though it may be delayed for a season, is sure in the end to follow. For the approbation and love of our species, we are, by nature, formed to thirst. To win them wisely and virtuously,—by *deserving*, to *obtain* them,—must be the desire of every generous and noble mind; but, unfortunately, they may sometimes be obtained without desert, and, by deserving, we may sometimes seem to forfeit them. Severe, in these cases, is the temptation to the upright. By holding fast integrity, to relin-

quish what the world deems honour; to forfeit praise, by doing that which is in truth most praiseworthy; knowingly to incur condemnation and contempt, by a virtuous resolve to give no just cause for them,—this is far from being an easy task. This, however, is what Christ requires of us, and by his own example has best taught us how to do. Complete was the triumph of the Cross over both sin and shame, and often, I need not say, has virtue found in the latter her most potent foe.

"With us" then, as with the great Apostle of the Gentiles, and his still greater Lord, let it be "a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment." Where we *can* do so, without forfeiture of our integrity or sacrifice of any substantial duty, let us "provide things honest in the sight of all men;" but, whether we can do so or not, let the one thing needful,—the self-acquitting, self-approving conscience,—never be wanting. Whatever man may think or say of us, let this "be our rejoicing, the testimony of conscience, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation among men." In the words of Barrow, "Let a good conscience always lie at the bottom of a good conversation; let the outside be good, but the best side be inward; let us endeavour to sanctify our life and conversation, but especially labour to purify our hearts and affections."

"Do what you can" is both a safe and a just rule. "Do what is expected from you" is often neither safe nor just. Our fellow-men are seldom competent judges either of the nature or the extent of our powers; they sometimes expect more, and sometimes are satisfied

with less than we are able to give. If we consent to stand at their tribunal, and await their decision as final, we shall often be beaten down to the very ground by unmerited censure, and, as often probably, unduly elated by undeserved praise; now, despondency will be the result of their unjust reproaches, and now, pride, presumption, and vanity, will find food in their extravagant applause. Nor in their decisions, be they of what kind they may, shall we find these judges themselves often agreed; what one condemns, another will approve; the public of this place is not the public of that; the public of one hour is not the public of the next. Unstable, indeed, will be his decisions, and ceaseless the fluctuations of his feelings, who attempts to measure, either himself or his actions, by the ever-varying standard of human esteem. A boat upon a surf-beaten shore, drawn down by one wave, only to be thrown up by the next, is but a faint emblem of that man, who stands listening to "the tumult of the people," for those oracles, which he ought to seek in the still voice of conscience, and the unchanging will of God.

"In a multitude of counsellors" there may perhaps be "safety," (though even this is not always true, and there is an opposite proverb well worth attending to, "be in peace with many, nevertheless have but one counsellor of a thousand;") but in a multitude of *judges*, who will pretend that safety should be sought? "Quot homines, tot sententiæ:" many men have many minds. It may sometimes be well, in doubtful cases, to listen to a variety of opinions, but in vain shall we do so, if the single judge, sitting on the judgment-seat within, the

sound, well-judging mind, be wanting, to decide wisely between them. True glory, the great Roman moralist, Cicero, has admirably defined to be "the consenting praise of good men, with uncorrupted voice, deciding justly in virtue's favour."* It must, according to this definition, be the praise "of the good," for no other praise is worth having; it must be *honest* praise, "given with uncorrupted voice;" it must be *merited* praise; the praise of those who know what we ought to be, and see us as we are, who decide, not only honestly, but justly, on our conduct and character. Good men may think well of us; they may sincerely say what they think; but unless we really deserve to be well thought of, their opinion goes for nothing, so far as we are concerned. It may do honour to *them*, but not to *us*;—it is not *glory*.

Alas! if this definition be a just one, and it seems to me beautifully precise and accurate, astonishingly so when we think that a heathen framed it, how much of human glory is not glory! How often does the praise that elates us proceed from polluted lips! How often is it pretended rather than felt, and, even when sincere, how often is it undeserved! Many are there truly in the present—not fewer perhaps than there were in the Saviour's days, to whom his grave rebuke might be addressed, "How can ye believe, who receive honour one from another, but seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" If true glory, my friends, or the esteem and love of God and of good men is our object, let us seek it in a modest but resolute obedience to the

* "Gloria est consentiens laus bonorum incorruptâ voce bene judicantium de excellente virtute."—3 Tusc. init.

dictates of conscience; in a determination to do what we ought by God's assistance as well as we can, in a decided preference of the secret sentence of the judge within, and the still greater Judge above, to the verdict of any, or of all, earthly courts and tribunals, whatsoever.

We have only to make God our friend, and we may be quite sure that the friendship of all good men will follow in due time. Through ignorance, through misconception, it may be withheld for a season, but if we deserve it, it is in store for us. Fear not, ye lowly children of virtue, ye that remain faithful though obscure, "though no man seeth you, God seeth you." The mist by which you are surrounded He shall disperse; the cloud which hides you from those whose hands you would fain grasp, and with whose hearts you long to mingle, shall open and melt away, at His bidding, and you shall stand forth, at length, in your true character, and your fellow-men shall see you and know you to be what you are. Humble virtue, (for virtue, where it is real, is always humble,) is the only true and lasting fame. It is written, and this is one of those scriptures that cannot be broken, that "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

I proceed to observe, in the last place, that, as, to do what, with God's assistance, we can, is all that God requires, or man can justly expect from us; so is it at once the most and the least, that we should demand of ourselves. We should wish for nothing *more*,—we should be satisfied with nothing *less*. And first, we should

wish for nothing more. Wish as we may, it is the very most that we shall be able to effect. Our performances must be necessarily limited by our powers. Men cannot be angels, if they would, neither can the possessor of one talent, by gift, render himself the possessor, in like manner, of five, or even of two. He may make the best use of what he has, and add to it, according to his ability, by virtuous industry, but the capital with which he commences must be wholly of God's bestowal; and all the wishing in the world will not make it a mite more or less. God "doeth what He will with His own;" a privilege, which, (though its words be presumption in any steward of His to arrogate) He, as the original and sole proprietor of all things, may justly claim, and we may be certain, seeing that He is all-wise and good, will not abuse.

It is for Him, then, as we enter into the world, naked and portionless, having nothing of our own,—nothing, from any source, save that of His free bounty, to endow us as He pleases; to give us five talents, two, or only one, as He may deem best; and it is for us to acquiesce, cheerfully and gratefully, assured that the position which we occupy in the social system, whether high or low, is wisely and mercifully assigned to us, with a view to the happiness of the whole, and therefore to that of each individual part, which, it is evident, that the happiness of the whole must needs flow back upon, and include,—even as the health of the whole body, not only results from, but increases, that of each separate limb; even as the streams, that flow into the ocean, not only swell with their small tributes, the great body of its

waters, but, in so doing, help to fill the mighty reservoir from which their own fountains are supplied. The great Ordainer, doubtless, assigns to us different positions, in the system, some of more, and some of less, apparent dignity; but there is not one of us to whom a useful and a needful part is not assigned; and he, who voluntarily fills the humblest post of duty, may console himself with the benevolent reflection that he is doing that for God and man which others might be less pleased to do, and that if there is less of glory, there may be, for that very reason, the more of love apparent, in the conscientious performance of an humble, but not therefore ignoble task. Ignoble the discharge of duty can never be; and he, who fills the lowliest station well, does his best to prove that he is not without qualifications—qualifications which he may rest satisfied will not be overlooked or forgotten—for a higher one.

Under God's government, "to be faithful in the few things" is the sure way "to be made ruler over many things." "They also serve," says our great bard, "who only stand and wait." True, they *serve;* but let them only do so modestly, observantly, patiently, for a season, and they shall be called, without fail,—by Him Who is no respecter of persons, but Who honours those, Who, in whatsoever station, "do what they can,"—to higher and nobler services. Dissatisfied with the talents which God has given, and the station in which God has placed them, not contented to perform their duty according to their ability, and to await cheerfully, at their allotted post, the great Ordainer's will for their advancement to a better one,—there are not a few, whose hearts are wholly set

on comparative rather than positive merit,—whose great object is to do more than others, or at least as much; to overtake, and, if they can, outstrip their fellow-combatants,—but not simply, or even chiefly, to reach the goal. These persons attempt, for the most part, both too much and too little; more than they can possibly accomplish in some respects, and less than they have power to do in others; more than they can accomplish, when they attempt to equal or to rival those whom Heaven has blessed with higher qualifications, ampler means, and better opportunities than themselves; less than they can perform, when, neglecting their peculiar duties, and the cultivation of the talents in which they happen to excel, they are content to loiter, whenever they find that they lead the way. We may fall far short of others and yet do our utmost; we may greatly excel others and yet leave much of our duty undone.

Finally, my brethren, the standard of duty measured by ability is the only safe standard. If in any instance we have done, by God's blessing, what we could, we have reason to thank Him, and to feel satisfied, though countless multitudes should have done more. If, on the other hand, we have performed less than was in our power, we have reason to lament, even though we should see ourselves first in the race, and the whole world behind us. As we should desire nothing *more*, so with nothing *less* than the performance of duty, according to our ability, should we ever rest contented. How often have we seen ambition and indolence united in the same character,—the eager desire to outstrip competitors, combined with the reluctance to make any

greater effort than may be sufficient for that purpose! Both these vices are selfish, unbenevolent, inconsistent with true virtue. Ambition is but too apt to take pleasure in the pain and mortification of others; indolence cannot consent to forego, for their good, the gratification of self. When the former has left his competitors behind, he embraces the latter, saying, "My point is gained, my rivals are defeated, and now therefore I am willing to rest, and dally for a season with you."

Very different are the thoughts and the language of him, who loves virtue for its own sake, whose object is positive, not comparative excellence. As long as life continues, he is seen pressing forward towards the mark. His eye and heart are fixed upon the goal. Those who run with him, he beholds with unenvious eyes, he cheers onward with a friendly and fraternal voice; when he passes *them* he is not elated, when *they* pass *him* he is not depressed. To do what he can by God's assistance, to have respect to all God's commandments, according to his knowledge of them, is his inward resolution. "I *can* do *no more*," he thinks within himself, "I *will* do *no less*." Thus may *we* resolve, beloved brethren, and may He "from Whom all holy desires all good counsels, and all just works do proceed," make us wise with His wisdom, and strong with His strength! Amen.

V.

THE GRADUAL ACQUISITION OF MORAL STRENGTH BY MORAL FIDELITY.

LUKE XVI. 10.

"HE THAT IS FAITHFUL IN THAT WHICH IS LEAST IS FAITHFUL ALSO IN MUCH, AND HE THAT IS UNJUST IN THE LEAST IS UNJUST ALSO IN MUCH."

FEW moral maxims, I am inclined to think, are more practically important than this. The want of attention to it, I believe to be the source of no small portion of the vice and misery that prevail in the world. Why is it that men's theory is for the most part so much better than their practice?—that they often think so correctly, and desire and intend so well, and yet act so ill? Why is it that "Hell is paved," as the saying is, "with good intentions"?—that we need no clearer or stronger evidence against us than ourselves, condemning our own actions by the wishes and resolutions that precede them; crying out, like Hazael, before we commit the deed of sin, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?" prefacing our apostasy, like Peter, with uncalled for professions of unswerving fidelity: "Though all should be offended because of thee, yet will not I,"—"I am ready to go with thee into prison and to death"?

Why is this? Because the willingness of the spirit, I shall perhaps be answered, is overcome by the weakness of the flesh.

But why *is* the flesh so weak? the question recurs. Has not God promised that "as the good man's day is, so his strength shall be"?—that if we be not wanting to ourselves, He will not be wanting to us, but will be present with us in our hour of trial, either to give the needful strength to overcome, or to make, with the temptation, a way to escape? How is it, then, that good men so often fall, that they find their strength insufficient for their day, that they miss the upholding hand in their hour of trial, sink to earth, notwithstanding all their previous aspirations after heaven, and do wrong, in despite of their clearest convictions of duty, and their strongest resolutions to do right? Are we to believe that God leaves His promise unperformed?—that the good man yields solely because he wants the natural power to resist, and that his sin, admitting it to be such, is chargeable rather upon the nature which God has given him, than upon any voluntary demerit of his own? This surely is not to be supposed; and yet, it cannot be denied, that many men, whose conduct and character are upon the whole good, and who feel a sincere desire, and even make habitual efforts, to "keep a conscience void of offence towards God and man," are, nevertheless, exposed to strong temptation, against which they struggle in vain, and to which they yield, only because, in the then imperfect state of their virtue, they find it impossible to resist. They see and would fain do the right thing; they even look up, it may be, for Heavenly aid; but the

temptation has a power over them which they cannot overcome, and they give way to it, though with strong misgivings, and with mingled surprise and sorrow at their own infatuation.

How is this to be explained? They do the most that they can do at the moment; they meet the enemy of their virtue with all the forces, that, at the period of his attack, they have at their command, and yet He, who alone giveth the victory, suffers them to be defeated; He sees them putting forth all the little strength they have, and yet He comes not to their aid. And wherefore? In their neglect of the important lesson which my text contains, we may, I think, frequently find the sufficient cause: they have not strength sufficient for great occasions, because they have not previously employed it, where they might have done so successfully, on small ones; they have not been faithful, where they might have been so without difficulty, in that which is least, and they find, therefore, that they cannot be faithful in much, when much is required of them. It is the fruit-bearing branch that the gardener pruneth and causeth to produce more fruit. It is they who do what they can, though it be little, that God assisteth to do more and greater things.

We must not hope to be able to resist great temptations, if we have not previously exercised our virtue in resisting smaller ones. Our minds are like our bodies, the muscles and sinews of which will be found incapable of great efforts, if they have not been gradually strengthened, by an ascending series of efforts of less magnitude. He who has sinned, may plead truly, that

he did the best that he could, at the moment, to resist the temptation; but why, we may ask him, was not his best something better? Would it not have been so, if he had previously put forth his strength to resist minor temptations? And what right has he to say that resistance was impossible; and to lay the burden of his sins upon the nature which God has given him, when he has voluntarily refused, or neglected, to train that nature to the excellence of which it was capable by a process of previous culture, which would have been, not only possible, but easy to him? What should we think of the athlete, who should content himself with the plea, that he exerted himself to the utmost, in the fight or the race, though he had wilfully neglected all previous training for it? But precisely similar is the conduct of those who impute their sins to the frailty of their nature and their want of Divine assistance, forgetting that they have done little, or nothing, by voluntary self-regulation and self-restraint, to render that nature less frail, and to deserve the assistance of Him, Whose rule it is, to help those only who have helped themselves, and according to the proportion in which they have done so.

We may struggle against a strong temptation now, but if we have previously been in the habit of yielding in cases of less moment, we have ourselves only to blame for our deficiency in strength, and have no right to complain, if we are punished by a failure of our efforts, in circumstances of difficulty, for our criminal neglect to put them forth previously, when we might have done so with ease, and with a certain pro-

spect of success. Daily resistance to small temptations, we should regard as the moral training by which we are to be prepared for future contests with temptations of greater strength. To neglect the training, let us remember, is to resign the victory. To yield, when the resistance is easy, and the peril small, is to forfeit our claim for aid, when the resistance shall be difficult, and the peril great. To offend against God in trifles, is not the way either to strengthen our own virtue, or to make sure of His assistance, for great emergencies.

And yet many seem to think, that, provided they commit no great crimes, and abstain from all gross excesses of appetite, passion, and temper, they may safely lead lives of luxurious self-indulgence; reducing self-denial to its minimum; pampering their lower appetites, up to, and often a little beyond, the utmost limit that the health of the body (for of that of the mind they make small account,) will allow; giving their passions rein, so far as they can do so without transgressing the obvious proprieties of social life; and indulging their infirmities of temper, where the propensity to act thus is not counteracted by the fear of incurring injury or inconvenience, either from the resentment, or the alienation of the affection, of those, whose goodwill they deem it their interest to retain.

The time has happily passed by, in this part of the world at least, when self-denial, self-mortification, and self-torture, considered simply as such, and without reference to any useful or benevolent object to be accomplished by them, were thought likely to propitiate the favour of God. His paternal character is now better

understood, and His children are aware, that pain, *a pain*, is to Him, as to them, an evil, and that it is only when it is needful for the production of an overbalance of happiness, that He can ever will its introduction amongst His works. Nevertheless, for this purpose, it is, without doubt, His will, that it should be often needful; and whenever it is so, it is, not less certainly, the part of true wisdom, to submit willingly and endure manfully, assured that by thus acting, whether we attain the end immediately in view or not, we shall, at the very least, strengthen, if I may so express myself, the sinews of the soul, and win at once our own and the Divine approbation.

Self-denial, for any object conscientiously deemed worthy of the sacrifice, is the true policy of wisdom and of virtue, and cannot fail to exalt him who practises it in the scale both of intellectual and moral being. "So needful is sacrifice," says an eloquent writer, "to the health and hardihood of conscience, that if the occasions for it do not present themselves spontaneously in our lot, we must create them for ourselves, not reserving to ourselves those exercises of virtue which are constitutionally pleasant, but, on the contrary, esteeming the asperity of a duty as the reason why we should put our hand to it at once, not acquiescing in the facility of wisely adjusted habits, but accepting the ease of living *well* as the peremptory summons of God to live *better*. He, in short, is no true soldier of the Lord, nor worthy to bear the Christian armour, who, in service so high, will not make an hour's forced march of duty every day. So doing, the inner power, the

athletic vigour of our moral nature, will not waste and die."

This is admirably said; the only thing that I should question in it, is the necessity of supposing that it will ever be necessary to go out of our way to seek for occasions of self-sacrifice, or that any one can be found in whose lot such occasions do not present themselves spontaneously, and in abundance. I know that there are "good, easy men, who never willingly do violence to their own selfish feelings; who, though they expect and even demand, many sacrifices, make few; and whose virtue, if virtue it can be called, is of that merely negative kind," so well described by the same author, "which abstains from gross, outward wrong, which commits neither theft, nor cruelty, nor excess, and paces the daily round of usage," and in which, as he justly observes, "there is not necessarily any principle of immortal growth." Such men, I know there are; but are they such because no opportunities of benevolent self-sacrifice have presented themselves?—because they must have gone out of their way to find them? I do not believe it. The truth is, that they have wilfully averted their eyes from objects that their selfishness rendered them reluctant to look upon; or having seen them, they have passed by, like the Priest and the Levite, on the other side.

Opportunities of virtuous self-denial and self-sacrifice present themselves frequently to all. Not a day passes over, on which he who is intent on the great business of life, the purification and amelioration of his heart and affections, and the performance of his duty

to God and man, will not feel himself called upon for repeated acts of self-denial, slight in themselves perhaps, and calling forth little effort in the performance, but deriving importance from their number, and from their tendency, when duly performed, to increase the sensibility of conscience, to keep moral vigilance awake, and to strengthen, by frequent and gentle action, the energies of the virtuous will. To instance a few particulars. In the indulgence of the appetites, every meal affords us an opportunity of wholesome self-restraint. Where the palate invites us to partake, an enlightened regard to the welfare of the whole bodily system warns us, not unfrequently, to forbear. Slight excesses, it is true, are seldom followed, at least immediately, by serious consequences. The Great Author of our frame has constructed it so skilfully, that it can bear much injudicious and even injurious treatment from us, without being absolutely disorganized, and incapacitated for the performance of its functions. The curious machine, wonderful to relate, is to a great extent a self-repairing one.

We have all experienced,—indeed, to our shame be it spoken, we are constantly experiencing,—the healing and restorative force of Nature, repairing the damages, which we, sometimes, doubtless ignorantly and unintentionally, but, too often knowingly and wilfully, inflict upon it. Encouraged by our knowledge of this fact, trespassing on the mercy which exempts us from what would otherwise have been the fatal consequences of our foolish self-indulgence, we venture, time after time, to pass a little beyond what we ourselves acknowledge to be the

limits of temperate enjoyment. What is the consequence? Let us even suppose that no harm is done to the bodily system—though this cannot be altogether the case,—but suppose it were so; suppose that we might trust to the miraculous powers (and miraculous they truly are) of Nature's healing hand, to obviate the physical bad consequences of every slight excess; yet, be it remembered that there are moral consequences also, —consequences which, we have no reason to expect, can be obviated. *There is no healing force of Nature,* that I am aware of, *to cure, by an insensible and painless process, the diseases of the soul.* By every act of vicious self-indulgence, however trifling, we inevitably impair the power of virtuous self-restraint. Slight excesses prepare the way, slowly perhaps, but surely, for greater ones; and the mind which has yielded to many small temptations, by every such act of concession, has weakened its power of resistance to stronger temptations, should they present themselves. True, they may never do so; but the mind will remain, nevertheless, in its weakened state; and it will be always weaker by the amount of strength that it has lost.

Whence the cry now for total abstinence? Solely because self-indulgence has been carried, by almost all classes, and especially, as we might expect, by the least instructed, to a ruinous excess. And it is felt that a preternaturally (not to call it an *un*naturally) strong remedy must be applied to an all but desperate disease. Jesus Christ "came eating and drinking," and so might we, if we could only confine ourselves, as he did, within the strict bounds of temperance; and not fancy,

as we are apt to do, that so long as we keep clear of gross excesses, slight ones are harmless. No excess is harmless; the very slightest, wilfully indulged in, even if it spare the body, will leave its stain upon the mind. Slight excesses, if they have not *done*, have *originated* all the mischief; they have given the first descending impulse to the gravitating body,—they have taken the reins, as it were, out of the hands of Reason, and thrown them upon the neck of Appetite, and how fast, or far, she shall run, when she finds herself free from the control of her heavenly charioteer, who shall venture to predict?

But I shall be told, perhaps, that this is ascetic doctrine, and shall be reminded of the favourite saying, that "to enjoy is to obey." The saying, I would reply, is a good one; pleasant to hear, and profitable to act upon, provided we do not forget its converse, "to obey is to enjoy." Within the bounds of obedience we cannot enjoy too much; but all enjoyment, beyond those bounds, is forbidden, and, by the sure appointment of Providence, must end in pain. All excess is sin; and neither reason nor Scripture will warrant the idea, that it is possible to administer a dose of this poison so infinitesimally small, as not to injure, much less to benefit the patient.

"In the moderate drinker," it has been said by some zealous advocates of total abstinence from fermented liquors, "we see the future drunkard." This seems to me as absurd as it would be to say, "In the moderate eater we see the future glutton." Moderation and excess are opposites; and the former cannot, without

losing its very nature, generate the latter. He who takes care to limit the indulgence of his appetites by a strict regard to his well-being, who resolutely abstains from every gratification of them likely to prove injurious, either from its quality or its quantity, is a temperate man, of whose fall into intemperance, so long as he adheres to his rule, there is no fear. But I readily admit that from any degree of acknowledged excess, however small, the progress to a little greater one is natural and probable, and may be most justly dreaded ; the ranks of the intemperate will never be swelled from those of the temperate ; but there is great danger that those who are knowingly intemperate to a small extent, who partake at all of that which they have reason to think hurtful, or immoderately of that which is good only when taken in moderation, will proceed on their downward path, not towards intemperance, for that they have already reached, but towards those grosser forms of it, which are hideous even in the eyes of those whose virtue is not scrupulous, and who, though they shrink from vice in full force, can tolerate it, well enough, in its embryo state. He who is faithful in a little, my friends, is faithful also in much. If you would not fall into great excesses hereafter, be on your guard now against the very smallest. The apostolic rule is to " be temperate in all things."

I might illustrate the same truth,—the importance of fidelity in small things, and the blessed nature of those results that are to be anticipated from an early and uniform resistance to the minor temptations of daily life,—by showing how the fearful ravages of the angry

passions, would, in all probability, be restrained by it. How seldom should we hear of murder and duelling, and war and personal violence, if the young were taught from the first, and the mature would profit by the numberless opportunities that the experience of daily life affords, to teach themselves, the duty of repressing all unreasonable, and restraining within due bounds, even reasonable anger! Scarcely a day passes over that does not bring with it trials of temper, from the due improvement of which we might effectually learn, if we would, the wisdom of self-command; the beauty of a calm and tranquil spirit; the utility of the soft answer that turneth away wrath; the folly of setting on the passions, which are blind, to contend blindly with each other; the absurdity of appealing to physical force, for the decision of questions, that should be submitted to the peaceful arbitration of reason and of virtue. But alas! these daily trials of temper are too often lost upon us, or worse than lost; the passions, which they should induce and enable us to govern, we allow them to exasperate. While the lesson of self-subjugation is easy, we will not learn it; while our feuds and hostilities are about mere trifles, we will not listen to any voice, from within or without, that would urge us to compose them. "Fight it out!" cries our own anger; and the wicked counsel is too often echoed by the malignity of others. What is the consequence? The spirit of wrath takes root in our bosoms, and the boy who has not restrained himself from blows, grows up into the man who cannot be content with less than blood.

Here too, faithfulness in a little, is the best security for faithfulness in much. Many of the deep tragedies that are acted under the influence of the angry passions, would be unheard of, if we would only turn to good account our minor provocations, and learn to keep our angry and irritable feelings in check, in the multitude of those cases of daily occurrence, in which we should find it easy, with a slight effort of the virtuous will, to do so. The irritable boy is the father of the passionate man; and he who robs his brother of the precious life, began by being angry with him without a cause. It is true, the murderer may be able to plead the intolerable nature of his wrongs, and the impossibility of restraining, at the moment, the torrent of angry passion, that hurried him along to the act of summary vengeance which he regrets, but cannot recall. True, we may admit, —but whence that impossibility? Would it have existed, had he accustomed himself, from the dawn of life and the infancy of passion, to keep his angry emotions under due restraint;—to act upon the strictly reasonable precept of the Apostle, "Be ye angry and sin not"? Sin not, that is, even in your righteous anger; "let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Through all the branches of human virtue, I might illustrate my general position. I might ask the man, for instance, who under the pressure of strong temptation, to avert death, to hide dishonour, to supply the means of living to those whom he loves better than himself, has been guilty of some act of gross and notorious fraud,—whether, in the transactions of his former life, he had uniformly acted upon high and honourable

principles, resisted temptations to deceit when they were less overpowering, and declined every species of unrighteous gain, and I have little hesitation in saying that such a man could not answer me truly in the affirmative. Gross fraud would be impossible to one who had previously exercised himself to keep a conscience clear from all the fainter shades of it.

Look again at him, who sinks powerless and prostrate under the pressure of some great calamity, who rushes to the grave, that with himself he may bury his sorrows in oblivion, and feel their bitterness no more. Shall we find, upon inquiry, that he has been one who has cherished, through life, a tranquil confidence in God? who has endured minor troubles with cheerful equanimity, and faced those of a darker and more serious character, with manly fortitude? I should be surprised indeed to learn that it was so. God seldom leaves those without support in their heavy troubles, who have leaned upon Him, and endeavoured to bear up manfully and cheerfully for His sake and in dependence upon His aid, in all their lighter ones. No! no! the truth is a universal one, that those who have been faithful in a little will be faithful also in much; that those who have done what they can, will have divine assistance, to do what of themselves they cannot. When our temptations prove too strong for us, and we try, as I question not we often do, to resist them in vain, it is because we voluntarily yielded to them when they were less powerful, and might have been subdued with comparatively little effort.

Great occasions, my friends, we ought to be aware,

are not necessary to form great characters. In the daily round of domestic and social duty, the very humblest of us may find, if we will, abundant food, and that too of the most nourishing kind, for every human virtue. In the peasant's hut apostolic virtues may be nourished into vigour, apostolic energies successfully developed. No limits can be assigned to what we might do; if we would only do what we could. Fidelity in a little would effectually strengthen us for fidelity in much. Where were the characters of those men formed, whom Jesus, with inspired wisdom, selected to evangelize the world? In great part beneath the lowly roofs of fishermen and peasants. He made them better doubtless, but they were good men when he chose them; "ye are clean" was his own testimony to them. Because they did the will of his Father, he made them the depositories of his doctrine. Pursuing their lowly avocations in the fields or on the lake, they had been faithful in a little; and behold how they were rewarded, by being enabled to prove themselves faithful in much.

Nay more, think of Jesus himself. Where was his youth passed? How was he trained and educated for his lofty mission? In what paths of life did his wonderful virtues find their sufficient food? Under the roof of a carpenter he passed his early days; under the eye of his poor parents, the thoughtful and obedient child grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man; and the daily duties of a private life were the nourishing food on which his wonderful virtues were fed. I say not, that, in his case, the ordinary means of virtue were not combined with extraordinary ones, but

I venture to affirm, that the ordinary and natural ones were not neglected, and that that was true of him, which I have been endeavouring to show is always true, that he was faithful in a little, and that God therefore gave him power and opportunity to be faithful in more.

May God give us grace in this respect, as in all others, to tread in his footsteps; to practise self-denial and self-restraint from our earliest years, and to cherish and strengthen the powers of the soul for the future performance of great duties, by the faithful and conscientious discharge of all those minor duties, which present themselves as we pass along! God, of his infinite mercy, grant it through Jesus Christ. Amen.

VI.

IMPULSIVE RECTITUDE AND A RETROSPECTIVE CONSCIENCE.

Acts xxvi. 9.

"I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

In the mingled feelings of self-acquittal and self-condemnation with which we find St. Paul not unfrequently referring, both in his speeches and epistles, to his former conduct as a persecutor of the Church of Christ, I think we have a proof of the fidelity of the narrative, and the genuineness of the writings in which they occur. Nothing can be more natural, than the mode in which he combines expressions of deep compunction and regret, with the apologetic plea of ignorance, and of well-intentioned, but misguided, zeal. As he charitably pleads for his countrymen, so also he pleads for himself, that he had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. "Ye have heard," says he in his Epistle to the Galatians,* "of my conversation in time past, in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many, my equals in my own nation,

* Gal. i. 13.

being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

Thus also in the Epistle to the Philippians (iii. 4): "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." And again, in his speech before Agrippa, of which my text forms a part: "My manner of life from my youth, which was, at the first, amongst my own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; who knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the strictest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee. I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which thing also I did at Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them: and I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."

In these passages, and in every other in which he alludes to the subject, Paul's testimony of himself is clear and consistent, that by birth, by education, and by conviction, he was a Jew of the strictest sect; that his conduct, from his youth upwards, had been in harmony with his Jewish convictions; and that, in opposing the religion of Christ, he had only done that which

he believed at the time that it was his duty to do. "Men and brethren," said he in his speech before the council at Jerusalem, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." How few are there, or have there ever been, who have had it in their power thus to testify; who have been able to affirm with truth, that they have yielded, through life, a steady and consistent obedience to the dictates of conscience!

In the fact that Paul could bear this testimony—this most honourable testimony—to himself, we discern, I think, one of the chief causes of his election to the high office of Apostle to the Gentiles. His manly and vigorous intellect doubtless tended, in no small degree, to qualify him for that most important station; and while his extensive and intimate acquaintance with the laws and institutions of his country, and with the habits and feelings of his countrymen, peculiarly fitted him to address himself to their understandings, as he was always wont to do, in the first instance, and to deal with their prejudices, it is no less certain that his lively imagination, his various learning, and his fluent eloquence, must have gained for him ready access to the mind and hearts of his Gentile auditors. His intellectual qualifications were unquestionably great, and were not overlooked, we may well suppose, amongst the reasons of the all-wise Ordainer's choice; but how greatly must their influence have been promoted by the moral qualities with which they were combined!—by the strict integrity, the unyielding fortitude, the persevering energy, the firm, indomitable will, which, from early life, must have distinguished him who could tes-

tify of himself, that, from his youth upwards, he had borne the heavy yoke of the Jewish law with a patient mind; that he had been exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers; and, touching the righteousness which is in the law, had, humanly speaking, preserved himself blameless. Surely he, who so well obeyed the dictates of a conscience only partially enlightened, well deserved both to become the participant of a purer and brighter light himself, and to be made the honoured instrument of shedding that light upon the minds of others.

Some have spoken of St. Paul as of one, who, prior to his conversion, had been a wicked and abandoned character. His own clear and explicit testimony proves, however, that this had not been the case; but that, on the contrary, making that due allowance, which, in the estimate of human character, must always be made for the imperfection of knowledge, the force of educational prejudices, and the frailties of our common nature, he had led a life of active and exemplary virtue. He asserts, and he calls upon those, who had known him from his youth upwards, to refute the assertion if they could, that he had lived in all good conscience before God, and that, touching the righteousness which was in the law, his conduct had been blameless.

I find it laid down by our Lord as a general principle, according to which our heavenly Father regulates the dispensation of his spiritual favours, that to Him who has,—that is, who improves what he has,—more shall be granted; that he who is faithful in a few things, shall be made ruler over many things; that he who will do the will of God, shall be made partaker of the mercies

of Christ: and in the conversion of St. Paul, far from finding, as some do, an exception to this rule, I see an exemplification of it. Though a persecutor, he was in other respects an upright and virtuous man; one who feared Jehovah, and strove, actively and perseveringly, to obey His law; and therefore did it please Him, who in His justice still remembers mercy, to show him, more perfectly, what that law was, and, in so doing, to convince him of his errors, and point out to him the folly and wickedness of persecution. Voluntarily he obeyed, ignorantly he transgressed; by the removal of his involuntary ignorance, his willing obedience was rewarded.

Surely this is in perfect accordance with the character and dispensations of that Lord of the Vineyard, of whom we read, that if any tree of His produceth fruit, He pruneth its wildness, that it may produce more fruit. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord," says the Apostle in his first Epistle to Timothy,* "who hath given me strength, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I acted ignorantly, in unbelief. And the favour of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with that faith and love which are by Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me chiefly Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him, to life everlasting."

* 1 Tim. i. 12.

Is there not an inconsistency here? some will perhaps feel disposed to ask. If, in his opposition to the religion of Jesus, and his persecution of its professors, Saul the Pharisee acted, as he affirmed, ignorantly,—if his conscience did indeed acquit him of any intentional transgression of the will of God,—if his serious and deliberate conviction, at the time, was that, in acting as he did, he acted as he ought to do, how are we to account for the strong terms of self-condemnation which Paul the Christian employs? for the bitter and remorseful feelings, under the influence of which, he describes himself, in the passage we have quoted, as "the chief of sinners," and, on another occasion, as "the least of the Apostles, not worthy to be called an Apostle," because he had "persecuted the Church of God"? If, in so doing, he had, in truth, acted ignorantly, and could charge himself with no wilful intention to offend, why should he speak of his conduct in terms of reprobation so severe? Seeing that sin is the wilful transgression of a known law, and that the morally blind, as our Lord himself declares, cannot have sin, Paul, it may be said, ought to have stood acquitted in his own eyes, and was to be blamed, for needlessly afflicting himself with remorse for actions, the real nature and tendency of which, he did not, at the period of their commission, understand.

I answer, in the first place, that in thinking of our past actions, it is no easy matter to view them, as it is obvious that we ought, if we would estimate truly their moral value, in the precise light in which we viewed them at the time, excluding everything that subsequent experience, by which we could not of course *then* be

guided, has taught us respecting them. The deeds of former days, as we look back upon them at a more advanced period, may often be compared, with justice, to pictures painted in a dark room, but exhibited in a light one; the interval, that has elapsed since their first performance, having supplied such illustrations of their nature, and exhibited such results of their agency, as could not possibly have been anticipated. Of human counsel, we know well, that the wisdom is not always to be judged of by the event; of human actions, we are quite aware, that it would often be wrong to infer either the virtue or the criminality from the consequences. The very wisest plans that man could devise, we have frequently seen frustrated; his most virtuous efforts, we have often known to terminate disastrously; while, on the other hand, his follies and his crimes have, in instances without number, become instrumental, in the hands of Providence, of great and lasting good. And yet, certain as this is, how prone are we, in our estimate both of own conduct and that of others, only to be influenced by the event! how apt are we to blame ourselves, for the evil consequences of that which was wisely planned and well intended; and, on the other hand, to assume credit for the fortuitously happy results of conduct, which we cannot honestly affirm to have had its source, either in prudent counsel or in virtuous motive! Even when we are perfectly aware, in looking back upon our past actions, that we see them *now* as we did not *then* see them; that subsequent events have occurred to illustrate their nature, or fresh accessions of knowledge flowed in, to alter our conceptions of them;

we may find it, nevertheless, very difficult, if not impossible to determine, to what precise extent this has been the case, and how far the plea of ignorance will justly avail us.

So it might be, and doubtless was, with Paul. How clear soever his conviction might be, that he had acted rightly, or to a great extent *ignorantly*, in his opposition to the cause, and in his persecution of the followers, of Christ, yet we cannot wonder, that when he looked back upon his conduct, and contemplated the lamentable consequences, both to himself and others, which perseverance in it must have involved, he should feel frequent and serious misgivings, as to the sufficiency of that plea of ignorance, on which alone he could rely. Was he, indeed, he would naturally ask himself, so fully satisfied as he ought to have been, of the lawfulness of the course he was pursuing? Had not shades of doubt sometimes even crossed his mind, which should have led him to investigate the subject with greater closeness, calmness, and impartiality? Might not his conviction of duty, admitting its existence, have resulted rather from the indulgence of passion and prejudice, than from the exercise of reason? Granting that he was ignorant, *ought* he to have been so? Had he left no means of better information unemployed, no grounds of wiser judgment uninvestigated? When he was so exceedingly mad against these supposed enemies of God and of His prophet, had he bethought himself, sufficiently, of restraining his anger within bounds? Had he pondered enough those sentences of his own law, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart;" "Thou shalt not avenge,

nor bear any grudge against, the children of thy people;" "To Me (Jehovah) belongeth vengeance and recompense;" "Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous;" "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city"? No, these precepts of his law, and others such as these, Paul, I am persuaded, was well aware that he had not duly pondered. He had obeyed too hastily, too uninquiringly (his conscience, I doubt not, told him), the dictates of a warm temper, and the promptings of an impetuous and headlong zeal. "By the wrath of man," he had, without mature reflection, and not therefore without all blame, "sought to accomplish the righteous purposes of God."

How sincere soever, therefore, his plea of ignorance might be, and to what extent soever he may have humbly hoped that it would avail, in extenuation of the guilt, and in mitigation of the punishment of the intolerant Pharisee, we cannot wonder that the penitent Christian found it insufficient to silence the upbraidings of his conscience, or to prevent him from looking back, with pungent and bitter shame and scorn, on his past career. True, he had "acted ignorantly in unbelief," and had obtained pardon, therefore, for the unforeseen results of his ignorance; but was that ignorance itself altogether blameless? Had he neglected no opportunity, had he left unemployed no means of removing it? Had he examined evidences with a diligent and dispassionate mind? Had he endeavoured to satisfy himself, on good and sufficient grounds, of the real merits of the cause respecting which he had dared to act so decided

a part? Had he taken sufficient pains to investigate the religion of Jesus, or to ascertain the character and motives of its professors, before he entered upon his career of persecution? If, to such questions as these, he could have returned no satisfactory answer, it is obvious that he must have regarded his ignorance, itself, as culpable, however honestly and effectually he might plead it as an excuse for the fatal consequences to which it led. Admitting that "he verily thought within himself, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth,"—though this erroneous conviction of duty would doubtless justify the actions that originated from it, yet it would not justify the previous criminal neglect of fair and impartial inquiry, and of just regard to the mental and moral rights of others, in which it had its source.

In acting upon our convictions of duty we are always right, but we must take care that those convictions themselves do not originate in the wilful abuse or in the voluntary, and therefore criminal, inactivity of our intellectual powers; in the indolent neglect of available means and opportunities of information; in the allowed subjection, of our understanding and our hearts, to the evil influences of prejudice and passion. A bigot and persecutor may doubtless be honest, and may sincerely think that he is doing God service by his acts of cruelty and intolerance. This was Paul's case, and has been that of multitudes, from his day to the present. Whenever it is so, such honesty and sincerity may, without question, be justly pleaded, in extenuation, as grounds for claiming some pity and forgiveness; but it does

not follow, that no ground of self-condemnation will remain. The probability, on the contrary, is, that no persecutor has ever existed, who has not had great reason, like Paul, to cherish remorseful feeling, and to whom a calm and dispassionate survey of his past conduct, might not have shown blameworthy sources of that pride, and self-opinion, and recklessness in the infliction of pain, which, in a greater or less degree, persecution always implies. Whatever may be thought of the duty of opposing the progress of false opinions, no man can seriously think it his duty to allow his passions to rage unrestrained; or, as Paul expressed it (for the original term employed by him is not less strong than our version of it), to be "exceedingly mad" against the holders of them.

I find no difficulty, therefore, in reconciling Paul's severe condemnation with his partial exculpation of himself. He knew, indeed, that he had been ignorant, but he knew, likewise, that he ought not to have been so; he had verily believed the cause, in support of which he was engaged, to be a good one; but in no cause, he was aware, not even in that of God and truth, ought he to have suffered his passions to rage so violently. Even while he excused, therefore, he justly blamed himself; even while his prayer was, "Father, forgive me, for I knew not what I did," he felt it necessary to add the confession, that he had voluntarily done many things, of the guilt of which he neither was, nor could be, ignorant; he had allowed his zeal to heat his passions to excess, and hurry him into acts of violence and cruelty, which would have been not less

criminal if they had been perpetrated *in behalf* of the religion of Jesus, than, as they were, in ignorant opposition to it.

In the language and conduct of St. Paul, then, there was a perfect truth to nature. His zeal was not less honest *before*, than *after* it was enlightened by knowledge. Vehement in persecution, he was not less vehement in his condemnation of himself for having persecuted. The Paul who denounced himself as the chief of sinners, as the least of the Apostles, as not worthy to be called an Apostle, because he had persecuted the Church of Christ, was evidently the same man, though guided by higher, and nobler, and more humanizing principles, with the Saul who shut up the saints in prison, and gave his voice against them when they were put to death, and punished them oft, in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, persecuted them "even unto strange cities." We see the same truthful, warm, and fervent spirit, though acted upon by very different influences. It is the same copious and powerful stream, but it rolls in a wider channel, through a richer and more fertile country. Led by the hand of Him Who turns the rivers of waters whither He will, it has passed the barriers of the desert, and has entered on the land of better promise; no longer does it roar over a rocky bed, and force its way between meeting cliffs; its path of power is now through green pastures and forest glades, and he who wanders beneath the lofty trees and over the verdant turf, fed by its still waters in their majestic course, recollects, with grateful wonder,

that the headlong mountain-torrent, was the vigorous youth of that very stream, of which he now beholds, with joy, the beneficent maturity. Paul the Christian was, obviously, Saul the Pharisee, purified, ennobled, and refined, by that additional knowledge which the Gospel supplied, and by those purer principles of action, which it infused and cherished.

In conclusion, let me direct your attention to a few practical inferences, which seem to flow from the view that we have taken of the Apostle's conduct and character. And, in the *first* place, let us be governed, in all that we do, by a regard to the dictates of conscience. In looking back upon his past career, Paul's only consolation was, that he had acted, as he thought at the time (how erroneously soever) that he ought to act; that his errors had been of the judgment, not of the will. To this cause only, did he ascribe the mercy that had been accorded to him, the grace that had been bestowed upon him. "I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord," said he, "who hath given me strength, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love, which are by Christ Jesus." He had been faithful, though in a bad cause, and his Lord trusted, therefore, that he would be no less faithful in a good one.

Fidelity to our convictions, be they what they may, is a sacred duty. "Whatsoever the hand," under the guidance of the truth-loving, truth-seeking mind,

"findeth to do, let us do it with our might." In the obedience of the will to the decisions of the mind, faithfully referring its actions, in every instance, to its own standard of right and wrong, all virtue consists. Let us only do, in every instance, that which we verily think that we ought to do, and, though we may be as greatly mistaken as Paul was, when he deemed it his duty to blaspheme the name, and persecute the followers of Jesus, we shall deserve partial approbation, and ultimately find mercy. The errors of our *judgment* will be *pardoned*, the *rectitude of our will* will be *rewarded*. So it was with Paul: because he was found faithful, his understanding was enlightened; because he acted upon the knowledge that he had, that knowledge was purified and enlarged.

But, secondly, let us remember, that though we ought always to act according to the dictates of conscience, conscience, itself, is far from being infallible, and often prompts to actions, which ultimately prove to be injurious, and which, if their real nature and tendency were understood, would be religiously avoided by the pious and virtuous mind; for what *is* conscience? Is it, as some seem to suppose, the voice of God within us, deciding, without appeal, on the moral character of our actions; a mysterious monitor, placed in every breast, to inform us, with unerring certainty, what is right or what is wrong; a faculty of moral discrimination, which all possess, and which can never lead astray? Assuredly it is not so. God has given us no such infallible guide in the path of duty; if He had, ignorance could, in no case, be an available excuse for error; to do wrong

unintentionally, would then have been impossible, and Paul could not have truly "thought within himself, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

What is conscience, then? In my opinion it is nothing more than the mind itself passing sentence, *according to the knowledge it possesses*, on the moral character of its own actions, approving them as good, or condemning them as evil. "According," I say, "to the knowledge it possesses;" for, hence it is, that so widely different an estimate is often formed by the consciences of different men—and not only so, but likewise by the conscience of the same men at different times—of the moral nature, value, and tendency of the same actions. Why did Paul, the Christian, know that conduct to be wrong, which Saul, the Pharisee, verily thought within himself to be right? Why do *we*, in numberless instances, change our opinion, as to the line of conduct which it is our duty to pursue; approve as good, what we previously condemned as evil, and condemn as evil, what we previously approved as good? Is it not, because the decisions of conscience vary with the variations of our knowlege; because conscience is, in fact, the mind itself deciding on the moral conduct, according to the evidence, more or less full, clear, and satisfactory, which happens to be before it?

Though to follow conscience, therefore, be always right, seeing that God has given us no better guide, we are not to regard it as a necessary consequence, that conscience will always guide us rightly; its doing so, on the contrary, must depend on its being well or ill-

informed. The human understanding can no more judge infallibly of right and wrong, or, in other words, of the moral nature and tendency of human actions, than of any other subject. The correctness of its decisions will, of course, depend, in every instance, on the degree in which it has been endowed with native vigour, strengthened by exercise, cultivated by education, and enlightened by accessions of knowledge from external sources. The conscience of the unlettered savage, will not be so safe a guide to him, as that of the enlightened student of the book of nature; and even he will fall into practical errors, from which the additional knowledge that revelation communicates will deliver the humblest of the faithful followers of Christ. Nor of Christians themselves, will all be equal in this respect. In proportion to the clearness and fullness of their comprehension of the law of Christ, will be the truth of their moral judgment, the correctness of the decisions of their consciences.

Ill-informed Christians, like ill-informed Jews or Heathens, often do wrong conscientiously; verily thinking with themselves, like Paul, that they ought to do what they ought not. Persecution particularly, is an error to which they continue, even in this enlightened age, to be much addicted. They do not, indeed, like the Calvins, Mores, and Cranmers of former days, burn, behead, scourge, and imprison, those who do not happen to see things in their light; but they anathematize and misrepresent them; they treat them as the enemies of God; and withhold from them that goodwill and kindness, to which, as men and brethren, they must

always be entitled. Even in this nineteenth century of the Christian era, the conscientious bigot, the honest Pharisee, who trusts in himself that he is righteous, and despises others, is no uncommon character. Many Christians exactly resemble Paul in this respect; they persecute Christ's genuine followers, and the only excuse, that can be made for them, is that "they know not what they do."

Follow the dictates of conscience then, my brethren, by all means; but forget not that conscience may be deceived. She is, without doubt, your best guide on earth, but she, herself, needs light from Heaven. Let that light, then, be earnestly implored and diligently sought for. Keep your minds always open to conviction, ready for the joyful reception of fresh light, even on those subjects on which you seem to have arrived at the greatest certainty. It is no proof of the truth of our opinions, that we honestly hold them, with a conviction firm and dear. On every subject, on which men differ from each other, one, at least, of the parties *must* be, and both, as it often happens, *may* be wrong. Let neither, then, judge the other; but let each seek the fullest possible satisfaction for himself, remembering that the most honest conscience, may, after all, be an erroneous one, and that there is none of us, who is not liable, like Paul, to adopt false opinions, to acquiesce in unsound arguments, and to think truly that which is not true.

Finally, let us learn from the passage before us, not to condemn any man hastily, as a wilful violator of the dictates of conscience, seeing that from deficient know-

ledge, or unbounded prejudice, another may stand justified to his own conscience, in doing that which we deem, on good and sufficient grounds, decidedly wrong. From his youth upwards, Saul had lived in all good conscience before God; and yet he verily thought within himself, that he ought to do, and accordingly did, many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And so it is with many of the excellent of the earth. Blindly, in particular instances, they transgress the law of God; they mistake the nature of its provisions; they err in the application of its rules. Whenever we have reason to suspect that this may be the case, let us forbear to judge hastily; in the present persecutor, let us hope to find the future Paul. In him who, from mistaken views of duty, now pursues the wrong course, with a resolute and steadfast mind, let us rejoice to behold the man, who will hereafter act, with equal energy and consistency, on wiser and better principles. On the really conscientious opponent of our truth, we need never look with apprehension; for the time, we may assure ourselves, is speedily approaching, when it will have him for a friend, and when he will gladly put forth in its favour all the mental and moral energies that he now marshals against it.

The true spirit of tolerance, says Jacobi, manifests itself in our conscientious toleration of each other's intolerance; doubtless this is a difficult lesson to learn. To be tolerant of the intolerant, to be charitable towards the uncharitable, to cherish good wishes and hopes for those, who have no good hopes, or even wishes, for us, is no easy matter; and yet the case of Paul may prove to

us, that it is our duty. Christianity, for a season, had no bitterer enemy, and yet the time arrived, when it could boast no warmer, truer, or more efficient friend. "Treat your friends," some worldly moralist once said, "as if they were one day to be your enemies." There is worldly wisdom, doubtless, in this rule; but I agree with a more benevolent moralist, in preferring the opposite maxim, "Treat your enemies, as if they were one day to be your friends;" with a mild forbearance, with a frank and manly courtesy, with a generous willingness to recognize and record every excellence, and to make candid allowance for every fault; with a magnanimity in opposition; with a noble rejection of every mean art and every unfair advantage; with conduct, in short, in all respects of such a kind, as shall lay the foundation of future friendship, in present esteem.

Never let us forget, my brethren, that the time is coming, when the good of all sects and parties, however widely they may differ, however strongly they may be opposed to each other now, will cease to be opponents; will meet, as friends, in the Universal Church of the living God, in the one fold of the one Shepherd. Let our conduct prove that we anticipate this time; that we long for its arrival; that we have learned from him, who looked upon Peter, after his denial, with forgiving love, and made Paul, the persecutor, his friend,

> "To see, through mercy's melting eye,
> The brother in the foe."

Deep was the sorrow, bitter the remorse of the great Apostle, when he reflected, after his conversion, on the feelings he had once cherished towards his brethren and

his Lord. Let us, admonished by his example, watch over our hearts, and not suffer to enter there,—or if they have already entered, resolutely banish,—every dark and malignant feeling, every disposition that the law of love forbids. May God give us wisdom to know what manner of spirit we are of, and grace to regulate our spirit according to our knowledge.

VII.

SOWING AND REAPING.

JOHN IV. 36.

"AND HE THAT REAPETH RECEIVETH WAGES, AND GATHERETH FRUIT UNTO LIFE ETERNAL: THAT BOTH HE THAT SOWETH AND HE THAT REAPETH MAY REJOICE TOGETHER."

NOT far from Sychar, a town of Samaria, into which he had sent his disciples to purchase food, Jesus, wearied with his journey, and exhausted by the noontide heat, sat down, on the brink of Jacob's well, to rest himself, and await their return. A Samaritan woman came thither to draw water. Forgetting his fatigues, he entered into earnest conversation with her, and by words that truth and Heaven inspired, soon brought home to her mind the conviction, that he was not merely, as she perceived, a prophet, but, as he assured her, the Christ. Anxious that those whom she loved should participate in his divine instructions, and, like her instructor, losing all thought of self in the excitement of the moment, she left her water-pot by the well-side, and hastened into the city, and with a natural exaggeration, if I may so term it, characteristic of excited feeling, called upon her fellow-townsmen to share in her wonder

and her pleasure. "Come," said she, "and see a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?"

Their curiosity was excited, and they followed her. Jesus saw them approaching. His disciples in the meantime had returned, and invited him to partake of the food that they had purchased; but in vain; the hunger and thirst of the soul had put to flight that of the body; in the desire to gratify his higher nature, the wants of his lower were forgotten. "I have meat to eat," said he, "that ye know not of; my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. Say not ye," he added, "there are yet four months and then cometh harvest? Lift up your eyes and look upon the fields,"—and we may imagine him pointing at the same time to his approaching auditors,—"for they are white already to the harvest." As though he had said, "In the spiritual harvest it is not always as in the natural, where a considerable interval of time must intervene between the sowing and the reaping. Here we may sometimes sow and reap the fruit immediately. Behold the proof—I have sown, and see what a harvest there is for you to reap. I have spoken the word of truth in the ears of one woman, and she brings with her many whom you may join with me in instructing." The words of our text follow,—"and he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

In other words, "It is not for him only that *commences* a good work, that the Great Work-master re-

serves a reward; for each one of those who carry it forward, and assist in its completion, He has a reward also. Their labours may be less dignified, less essential;—to have originated a blessing, may seem more honourable than to have cherished and perpetuated it; there is honour, nevertheless, and happiness in store for all, who, in any way, whether as primary or secondary causes, as chief or subordinate agents, as wise contrivers or efficient instruments, have lent their willing aid, in any work of true beneficence; only let it be completed, and no individual whose hand, obeying the dictates of his heart, has toiled in the accomplishment, shall be without his due share in the joy; only let the harvest be gathered in, and, in the harvest home, both the sowers and the reapers shall rejoice together." Most gracious, most consolatory, most encouraging, was this assurance of our Lord's. Comparing themselves with him, contrasting the feebleness and insignificance of their instrumentality, with the might and majesty of his, his followers might well have doubted, whether they could reasonably hope to share his future lot; whether any bliss, similar to that which he was destined to inherit, could be in reserve for them.

How must their hearts have been cheered, then, and their zeal to labour in the good cause, animated and strengthened, when they found him thus associating them, as fellow-labourers, with himself, and holding forth the glad assurance, that, as they had been sharers in his toils, they should be sharers also in his reward! "Herein," said he, "is that saying true,—one soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon

ye bestowed no labour; others have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours." And so it has been, my friends, from the foundation of the world. Seldom has it been the lot of any individual, single and unaided, to confer great blessings upon his species. Few have been the "enterprises of great pith and moment," that have not required the combined exertions of many, for their accomplishment. It seems to be the will of Providence, that, for almost every blessing worth having, we should unite our toils; and that the good things that fall to our share, should thus possess, in addition to their intrinsic, a *social* value, arising from the consideration of the number of minds and hands, that have lent fraternal aid in their preparation or procurement. Scarcely can we think of a pleasure, comfort, or convenience, bodily or mental, that we enjoy, without perceiving how little we can do alone, for how much we are necessarily dependent on the aid of others. It is a universal law, "one soweth, and another reapeth." We enter upon the labours of those who have gone before us, and those who follow shall enter upon ours.

In what there is of wisdom and goodness in the world now, we see the result of the intellectual and moral labours of the wise and good of all preceding ages; it is for us to continue the work of love, that they have carried forward thus far, and to see to it, that as our predecessors have not been found wanting to us, we be not found wanting to our posterity. It is true, what we call the old age of the world was properly its childhood, and the wisdom of our ances-

tors, was the wisdom of those who possessed fewer of the means and materials of knowledge, and may be reasonably supposed, therefore, to have enjoyed less of the fruit of it than ourselves. Never let it be forgotten, however, that they sowed the seed, of which the fruit is reaped by us; that they laid the foundation, on which we erect the superstructure; that if they had not lived and toiled before us, we must have commenced where they did, and that it is only because we have entered upon their labours, that we have been able to accomplish more,—if, perchance, we have done so,—or even as much, by our own. There is a sense, it has been well said, in which "the boy is father of the man." In each successive period of our being, we trade, as it were, and grow rich, upon the capital inherited from that which preceded it. Because the boy is diligent and docile, the youth is thoughtful and intelligent, the man is wise.

So is it with the species. We are wiser than our fathers, only because we had their accumulated wisdom to begin with; and if our posterity prove wiser than we, as we hope and pray and believe that they will, to us, if the fault be not our own, will their debt of gratitude be due. God forbid, my friends, that we should be ungrateful to those upon whose labours we have entered, —from whom, even supposing them poorer, or rather less rich than we, we inherited the capital, by which we have enriched ourselves. When the golden grain falls before the reaper, let a blessing be breathed upon the name of him, by whom the seed was sown. When the ripened fruit of knowledge is gathered in, let not the

benefactor be forgotten, who instilled into the mind the elementary truths, from which that knowledge sprang. When matured virtue gains the victory that overcometh the world, let a prayer ascend that *his* life may be happy, or, should life have ceased, that *his* memory may be blessed, to whose wise counsels, pure example, or wholesome discipline of whatsoever kind, the origin, growth, or preservation of that virtue, in any of its stages, is to be ascribed. Ingratitude is one of the worst and *basest* of the vices; and, in proportion to the appreciated value of the blessings which are the objects of it, must be its criminality. I say the *appreciated* value, for men are sometimes unjustly blamed for their want of gratitude for blessings, in the value of which they have never been instructed. Swine are not to be blamed, if they do trample upon pearls; nor dogs if they do bark, when that which is holy is cast before them.

So when the very young, or the very ignorant, reject or despise blessings, which they have never been taught to estimate, when they hate instruction, and refuse or resent reproof, we cannot greatly wonder, and should only manifest our own folly, were we to betray any large measure of indignation. To expect fools to value wisdom, or to feel grateful for its counsels, were to be fools ourselves. Let us remove their folly first, and then we may reasonably expect their gratitude. Often have I heard vain laments over the ingratitude of persons, who have never been taught how to value that, which they are, nevertheless, expected to feel grateful for. But where this is not the

case, where the value of the blessing bestowed, is clearly comprehended, not to feel duly grateful for it is indeed a sin. And where, let me ask, are the persons, to whom the wise and the virtuous ought to feel more deeply grateful, than to those to whom they are indebted for that mental and moral and religious discipline, from which, combined with their own efforts for self-culture and self-improvement, their wisdom and virtue have sprung? To none, it seems to me, can we owe a larger debt of gratitude, than to those, who, from pure motives, in the spirit of love, have well performed the part of wise and good instructors. Even our parents themselves, if they have discharged, as they ought, their sacred duties, are far dearer to us as the parents of our minds, than as the parents of our bodies. For having brought us into being, for having fed, and clothed, and sheltered us from the inclement seasons, we are doubtless grateful to them; but if, in addition to all this, they have trained and nurtured us for an existence that shall never end; if they have sown the seed of good instruction in our minds, and, by the warmth and brightness of their own example, have helped it to germinate; and, by parental prayers, have called down the Divine blessing on its growth,—how unspeakably, in that case, must we feel our motives for gratitude increased! How profound should be our reverence, how warm our love, for those whom we regard as the parents of our spirits, as well as our bodies,—as our parents not for time only, but also for eternity!

And, surely, in a somewhat similar light, every in-

structor, who conscientiously performs his duty, ought to be regarded. So far as he acts well his part, he stands in the relation of a parent to that portion of our nature that shall never die. Not unfrequently has it excited my surprise, to observe how entirely, in after-life, even the wise and good, have sometimes seemed to lose sight of those, to whose intellectual and moral discipline, in early years, they have been indebted for the principles, feelings, dispositions, and habits, which formed the very groundwork of their characters, and in which we may find the secret of their subsequent prosperity and happiness. The well-educated man rises to high, honourable distinction in the world; the accomplished woman shines forth, the grace and ornament of the circle in which she moves; and yet how often does it happen, that those who, under God, most powerfully contributed to this result, the instructors or instructresses of their youth, those from whose lips they drank in the precepts of wisdom, and in whose example they read the more impressive lessons of virtue, stand nevertheless neglected, if not forgotten, in the background. This surely ought not so to be. When the cry of "Harvest-home" is raised, it is only right that the sowers, if they still survive, should be invited with the reapers to the feast, or that their names and services should be gratefully remembered, if their personal presence can be enjoyed no more. When the work of love is completed, God forbid that we should forget those, to whom we owe its commencement, or who watched over its progress.

To excite feelings in harmony with these sentiments,

I well know, my friends, that I have only to invite you to retrace, "as, in a map, the voyager, his course," the years, whether few or many, of your past lives, and to array, before the mind's eye, the parents, instructors, friends,—many of them now passed away from this visible world, some happily surviving,—to whom you are indebted, (oh! how or when shall you discharge that debt?) for lessons of truth and virtue without number, spoken with the lips, or acted in the life, the blessed influence of which on your conduct and conversation, your welfare and happiness, you have long felt, and hope and pray that you may never cease to feel. When you think of any of those faithful friends and counsellors, to whom I have adverted, whose course of active virtue, you will joyfully and gratefully reflect, ran, for a longer or shorter period, parallel with yours, you will, I am sure, deeply feel, that there remains a debt of gratitude for you to pay, and that, in the spiritual as in the natural harvest, it becomes the reapers of the fruit, never to lose sight of the obligations, under which they lie to the sowers of the seed. How shall those obligations be discharged? How shall that debt of gratitude be paid? Do what you can, you will not, I feel confident, easily persuade yourselves, that you have done enough.

In the first place, then, cherish the memory of your friends of former days. It would grieve them to think that they were thought and spoken of, amongst you, no more. Do they live still? your thoughts of love will be precious to them; have they departed hence? still forget them not:—

"On some fond breast the parting soul relies—
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires."

What is true of piety, is true also of friendship. "They that feared the Lord," says the prophet Malachi, "spake often one to another." They were not satisfied with dwelling, singly and apart, on the glorious perfections and wonderful works of Him Whom they adored; their social nature led them to hold frequent and earnest communication with each other on a subject so deeply interesting: "they took sweet counsel together, as they walked to the house of God in company." And thus also should we, if we may be allowed by greater things to illustrate smaller, revive from time to time in friendly converse, the memory of those, in respect and love for whom, it has been our happiness, while yet they lived, to sympathize. Still should their names be "familiar in our mouths as household words;" still should their wise sayings, and their deeds of virtue, be "freshly remembered" by us.

Even death exerts more than his lawful power, when he effaces the images of the dead from the souls of the living. God permits him to hide from the bodily eye those whom we love; but he cannot conceal them from the eye of the mind, without our own fault.

To our thoughtlessness and ingratitude must it be ascribed, if the virtuous dead do not often revisit us in the silent—and renew their sweet converse with us, even in the social—hour; often, then, let us speak of them to each other, as well as think of them apart, and when we do so, let truth as well as love, so far as it is pos-

sible, strictly regulate both our thoughts and words;—*so far as it is possible*, I say, for I am well aware that God is the sole judge of the living and the dead,—that He alone knows perfectly what we are now, and what those whom we loved were, during the term of their probation. Doubtless it is not for us to pronounce an unfaltering judgment even upon ourselves—how much less, then, upon them. Yet when we do speak of them, let us speak of them candidly and kindly, according to our knowledge. "Flattery," as the poet tells us, "cannot soothe the dull, cold ear of death;" and if, as hope whispers, the separated soul have an ear, we may be quite sure that it will have an approving one for truth alone. The "honest chronicler,"—he who "nothing extenuates, nor sets down aught in malice,"—is the only one that genuine worth and wisdom would desire to have, or that could be fairly expected to do any measure of real justice to them. Indiscriminate praise is no praise. Omit the shades in a picture, and the bright parts will not stand forth, as they ought, in bold relief. By words of faithfulness and truth, then, as well as love, let us bear an unsuspected testimony to our friends of former days. When those who hear us perceive that we do not flatter, they will listen and believe, admire, and perhaps, imitate. Thus shall we benefit those who listen, at the same time that we do substantial honour to those of whom we speak. Thus shall we give to virtue, now unseen, not merely a bare existence in the minds of men, but a practical influence over their lives and actions.

Once more, my friends, it is not by words alone, but

by deeds also, that we must prove our gratitude to the wise and good who have gone before us; we must not only cherish their memories, but emulate their virtues; we must carry forward the good work which they have begun; if they fall on the field of honour, we must be prepared to step into their place; if they rest from their labours, we must carry them on; if they were sowers of the good seed in their day, we must be reapers of the ripe fruit in ours. Nor let us fall into the lamentable, but common mistake, of supposing that it is to professed ministers of the Gospel only, that the great work of evangelizing the world is committed. Each one of us has a field of moral usefulness around him, which it is his sacred duty to cultivate. There is no true Christian, who, if his heart is so disposed, may not lend powerful aid in Christianizing others; who may not do much by his personal, domestic, and social influences, to make the Gospel better understood and better practised. If, instead of building a few churches, employing a few ministers, and sending forth a few missionaries (though I mean not to deny that these are good and useful works in their season), each one of us would labour, for his Master's sake, to sanctify himself and those around him, the progress of the Gospel would indeed be rapid; it would advance, as the waves of the multitudinous ocean upon the shore, and the time would soon arrive, when the knowledge of God would cover the earth, as the waters cover the deep places of the sea.

If the world is to be Christianized at all, it must be, not by a few selected delegates from the Christian body, however wise and eloquent, but by the mighty body

itself, putting forth the combined energies of all its members in the work. The plan of delegation has not succeeded hitherto, nor will it succeed. As well might we expect the tide to rise, were every thousandth or millionth wave deputed for the purpose, on what might be called the clerical plan. In the plenteous harvest of the Gospel, the labourers cannot be too numerous; no one, who is willing to labour, need be without work, and no one, who works honestly and heartily, need work in vain. Are we indeed grateful, then, to those who have laboured thus? Do we think with respect of powerful arms that have been palsied, and can wield the sickle no longer? Do we drop the tear of deep and heartfelt sorrow to the memory of the industrious reapers who have been gathered to their fathers? Let us prove our sincerity, by doing, each of us what we can, though it be but little, to supply the loss. To us also the night cometh, in which we cannot work. God forbid that when it arrives, we should be found to have paid no better or costlier tribute to the memory of the great and good who have gone before us, than words of empty praise, or tears of fruitless regret. Rather let the departure of our fellow-labourers from the field excite us to labour more abundantly; and, while we cherish hopes full of immortality for them, let us prove, by corrected errors, strengthened virtues, and increased exertions, that, for us also, they have not lived in vain, and that neither their precepts nor their example, have been, or will be, forgotten by us.

May God render every labour of love fruitful, raise up able and worthy successors to each successive gene-

ration of labourers, and grant that both the seed which has been sown, and that which shall be sown, may grow up and flourish unto life eternal. God of His infinite mercy grant it, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

VIII.

ON PATRIOTISM.

1.

PSALM CXXII. 6-9.

"PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM: THEY SHALL PROSPER THAT LOVE THEE. PEACE BE WITHIN THY WALLS, AND PROSPERITY WITHIN THY PALACES. FOR MY BRETHREN'S AND COMPANIONS' SAKE, I WILL NOW SAY, PEACE BE WITHIN THEE. BECAUSE OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD OUR GOD, I WILL SEEK THY GOOD."

THE beautiful Psalm from which these words are taken is with probability conjectured to have been one of those sung by the Israelites on their annual journeys to the festivals at Jerusalem. In the title, on which however no reliance can be placed, as many of the titles are unquestionably wrong, it is called a song of degrees, and ascribed to David. What is meant by a song of degrees—literally, steps or ascensions—is much disputed by critics. Some suppose all thus denominated to have been—as the subject-matter affords some ground for thinking this to be—pilgrim songs, deriving their name from the circumstance, that they were sung when the people ascended, or went up, as they were wont to express it, to Jerusalem; others think this title to refer, in every instance, to the return from the captivity, that

return being styled an ascent. Some, again, are of opinion that the word 'steps' may have reference to a particular species of metre; while others suppose the term to be a musical one, and to indicate the tone of voice, or key, in which the Psalms were to be sung.

Which of these conjectures, or whether any of them, is right, I will not pretend to determine. I think it certain, however, from internal evidence, that the Psalm is of later date than the time of David, and probable that it was, as the poetical Herder supposes, the composition of some Jew residing at a distance from the great mother-city of his native land, and who, having seen and admired its walls and palaces, and Holy Temple, on some previous occasion, anticipated, with patriotic pride and joy, another visit to them. "I was glad when they said to me, let us go up to the house of the Lord; our feet shall (soon) stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together." How naturally, by the way, would these words proceed from the lips of a dweller in some rural hamlet or solitary cottage, to whom the sight of a great city, with its long lines of building, was not familiar! "Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, according to the law of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. There stand the thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren's and companions' sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good."

It is an exquisite poem, and the feelings, to which it gives utterance, will not fail to find an echo in every pious and patriotic breast. To the Jew, Jerusalem was not the metropolis of his native land: it was the Holy City of his God, illustrious even more by the Temple of Jehovah, than by the thrones of the house of David. He regarded it, not as the dweller in some distant corner of the land of *our* nativity, might regard the great far-off city, upon whose glories, though the fame of them should have reached his ears, his eyes might never hope to rest,—but as the central point to which his strongest affections drew him, and his pilgrim feet were often devoutly to wend their way. To Jerusalem, year after year, the tribes went up, circulating through it, as life-blood through the great heart of the land. *There* was concentrated all that was most dear to the sons and daughters of Israel, and without Jerusalem, their country would have been no country to them. From whatever quarter of the land the captive Jew might come, it was of Zion that he thought; when he sat down and wept by the rivers of Babylon, the language of his heart was, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

With windows opened towards Jerusalem, the exiled prophet prayed, in the hour when he felt, most bitterly, what it was to be under the tyrant rule of a stranger; and it was over Jerusalem that the Saviour of the world, himself, poured the tenderest and most melodious laments that were ever breathed from a patriotic heart;—

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Thus also, on another occasion, "when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!—but now they are hidden from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

Let it not be said, then, that the virtue of patriotism is one to which the heart of Jesus was a stranger, or the value and importance of which his religion does not recognize. The passages which I have quoted, with which the general tenour of his instructions was in perfect harmony, express a peculiar sympathy with his countrymen, as such. To them his personal mission was almost wholly confined. "I am not sent," said he, "save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and how strong were the yearnings of his heart towards them, his labours and sufferings on their behalf, his unwearied exertions to do them good, and his patient endurance of the wrongs which they inflicted, his zeal to

teach them many things while he lived, and his "Father, forgive them," when he died,—abundantly prove.

It must be quite obvious to the attentive reader of his life, that though universal charity was inculcated both by his precepts and example, the particular affections were forbidden by neither; that though his followers were commanded to love all men, as brethren of God's family, they were nowhere enjoined to forget those peculiar ties of kindred, friendship, patriotism, by which the common tie of human brotherhood is naturally, not to say necessarily, strengthened. Who will pretend to affirm that the mother of Jesus, for whom even in his last agonies he felt and expressed his anxious care and love, was not dearer to him than other women? Beloved by him as were all his disciples, was there not one of them who received, and retains to this day, the epithet of *the* disciple whom Jesus loved? And on the same principle, may we not well believe that the country, in the bosom of which he was nurtured, whose hills and valleys, green fields, and lakes, and streams, had, from his earliest years, fed his eyes, and heart, and imagination, with their beauty, and with whose inhabitants his closest and dearest friendships had been formed, must have been nearer and dearer to his heart than other countries? Though he came to bring "peace on earth," and "goodwill to all men," without distinction of country or of caste, is it not more than probable that when he thought of his native land, the sentiment of the Psalmist excited in his breast a stronger thrill—"For my brethren's and companions' sake, I will say, Peace be within thee"?

Philanthropy does not necessarily exclude patriotism, any more than patriotism excludes friendship or the love of kindred; on the contrary, the general affection implies all the particular ones; the love of country, as Cicero has justly observed, embraces all the less expansive social charities, and we may safely assume that the heart that loves most extensively, will love, with peculiar fervour, those that are nearest to it,—even as the circles of motion rise highest near the centre from which the motion begins. To love all alike is for Him only Who is equally near to all,—"Whose centre is everywhere, and His circumference nowhere."

Patriotism then, I maintain, is not an unreasonable or an unchristian affection. It is not unreasonable, for not only is it the law of our finite nature that our affections should be drawn forth most powerfully towards those, of whose good qualities we have had the fullest personal experience,—that we should love friends and countrymen better than strangers and aliens, but it is, as may be readily shown, a law of most beneficial influence; the whole community being sure to be best provided for, when each individual member of it cares most for those with whom he stands, by the appointment of Providence, in the closest connection,—with whose wants proximity renders him most familiar, and to whose happiness it enables him to minister with the greatest ease. All are most likely to be cared for, where each cares for his own. If the effect of an enlarged philanthropy were, as some seem to suppose that it ought to be, to equalize our interest for the near and the remote,—for the inhabitant of our native land and the dweller at the farthest

pole, it might well be questioned whether its growing prevalence would not prove a curse, rather than a blessing, to our species, often calling off, to distant fields of benevolent exertion, those thoughts and cares which might be much more easily and efficiently employed on some closely bordering district. We are doubtless commanded, and there are principles in our nature which incline us, to "honour all men,"—nevertheless to "honour our father and mother" is a *prior* commandment, obedience to which is still more strongly enforced by principles within; and so likewise, though no community of living men should be regarded by us with indifference, or left unbenefited, should a fair opportunity of serving it present itself, yet ought that community with which it has pleased God immediately to connect us, to command the largest portion of our love and service. The charity which does not end at home, will only be the more efficient for beginning there. The man who zealously and faithfully discharges, in the first instance, the duties of a kinsman and friend, will, by so doing, qualify himself to be the better patriot, and the true patriot will have made no small advances towards the character and honours of the true philanthropist.

Patriotism, then, is not an unreasonable affection; neither is it an unchristian one; our Lord, as we have seen, exemplified, if he did not inculcate it. He began his career of mercy to mankind by showing mercy to his own countrymen; Israel had the firstfruits of his labours of love. The bitterest tears that he shed over any city, were shed over Jerusalem. Before he became a "light to lighten the Gentiles," he shone forth as

the "glory of his people Israel." To his followers he assigned the duty of preaching the doctrines of salvation in other lands; but it accorded, we have every reason to believe, not less with his own inclination than with God's will, that the dwellers of his native land should hear those doctrines from himself. If many of them heard them in vain, it was not his fault, for his words were words of tenderness as well as power; as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, so would he have gathered them, but they would not.

Let it not be said, my brethren, that Jesus was no patriot; he was a patriot of the best kind, a philanthropic patriot. He loved his country, dearly indeed, as his words and actions prove, but not exclusively; he loved it as a portion,—by him, it might be, the most beloved, but not by God,—of God's great family. In the warmth of that love which he had drawn in with his earliest breath, and cherished, by the interchange of kind offices, during a sojourn of more than thirty years, towards his own nation, he did not forget that "God hath made of one blood, *all* nations to dwell together on the face of the earth." He did not lose sight, as too many so-called patriots do, of the great truth, that all who rejoice in the name of man,—be the colour of their skin, the proportions of their frame, the form and trick of their features, the accents of their voice, what they may, no matter in what part of God's earth they may reside, or by what name they may be called,—Jew or Gentile, Greek or Roman, Gaul or Briton, Celt or Saxon,—are equally God's children, and related therefore, if it be true that descent from a common Father

constitutes that relation, as brethren to each other. This truth Jesus constantly bore in mind, and every patriot, who has studied in his school, will do the same.

For our Lord's not having directly inculcated, that patriotism which he brightly exemplified, it is easy to account. Those, to whom his instructions were immediately addressed, were already national to a fault. Upon a people amongst whom the spirit of clanship prevailed, whose tribes and families were at variance with each other, it might have been useful to inculcate the love of country, which, in their case, would have implied a further extension of the benevolent principle; but the Jews were not thus divided, all their institutions had tended to amalgamate them. If Jerusalem was "builded as a city that is compact together," it was, in this respect, but a type of Israel. Their common temple, their joint worship, their frequent intermingling at their festivals, the pilgrim-journeys of their tribes from the remotest districts of their land to the great central city, all tended to foster the spirit of nationality. A direct enforcement of that spirit therefore was little needed; what they had to learn, was the duty of extending their benevolence to other nations; what they had to unlearn, was their propensity to treat Gentiles as dogs, to speak of Samaritans as demoniacs, to forget the universal brotherhood of the human race, under the influence of a narrow and bitterly exclusive nationality. To the question, "Who is my neighbour?" they were already prepared to answer, "Every son of Abraham, every Jew of every tribe." The object of Jesus, therefore, was to teach them more than they had yet learned, and to lead them

onward from nationality to philanthropy. Could he only teach them to regard the Samaritan and the Heathen as their neighbour, he well knew that he might trust to nature, to infuse and cherish a peculiar warmth and tenderness of feeling, for those, who, being nearer, could not but be dearer to their hearts. Provide for the wide extension of the benevolent feeling from the heart's centre, and its prevailing power, near that centre, may be safely left to provide for itself. To preach nationality to a Jew, would indeed have been a superfluous task; as much so as it might be in modern days, to inculcate upon free-born Britons, or Americans, the recognition of each other's rights: but to cause the Jew to feel that the Samaritan was his neighbour, this was scarcely less difficult, than it might perhaps be, to convince some free-born men, of the great nations to which I have alluded, that their black slaves were born with a title to freedom, in the estimate of God, as valid and indefeasible as theirs. This was the task therefore to which Jesus addressed himself. He preached philanthropy, and trusted, that, if he could do so with power and effect, patriotism would preach itself.

True patriotism, brethren, is love fertilizing the district in which it takes its rise; yet not stopping there, but passing on to regions more remote. It resembles, not a lake hemmed in by circling shores, but a sea whose flowing tides wash many lands. It differs from much that bears the name of patriotism, both in its source and its manifestations. And first in its source: it is not, what patriotism is called, sometimes is, a mere form of egotistical selfishness. With some, it would almost appear as

if their country were dear to them, simply because it is *theirs*. '*I* was born and bred in it, *my* kindred and friends dwell in it, *my* lands and possessions are part and parcel of it. It is *my* country, and, as such, I will uphold and maintain its excellence, against any who may venture to impugn it.' It is well to know, and often important to advert to, the distinction between mine and thine; but it is a distinction, which, though justice should never overlook, selfishness and vanity often lay too great a stress upon. He has but a poor reason for loving his country, or anything else, who loves solely because it is his own. The father who loves his child for no better reason than because it calls him father, and rests contented with that reason, will take little pains, it is to be feared, to make him worthy of his love. In the thought 'he is mine,' the egotistic parent, it is to be feared, has not unfrequently forgotten the obligation of bringing up his child as Christ's, and as God's. And so has it sometimes been with the patriot, in like manner: overcome by the magic influence of that little word "*my*," and beholding his country, in common with all other things that he calls his own, illumined, like the objects that surround divine persons in some Italian pictures, with the light that radiates from the principal figure—self, he never thinks of inquiring into the defects of her institutions; he never imagines that he might borrow from other nations many valuable hints for the improvement of his own. Truly, such egotistic patriotism is of little worth.

Again, the patriotism that springs solely from association and habit, cannot boast much greater value.

Many persons love their country, merely because they have always lived in it; because its localities and its scenery have become familiar, and, therefore, dear to their eyes; because the manners of its inhabitants, are such as they have been accustomed to from their childhood, and their phraseology falls upon their ear, like household words; because habitual conformity has reconciled them to its institutions, rendering them tolerable, even when they are evil, and indispensable when they are good. I say not, indeed, that this influence of association and habit ought to be wholly inoperative,—far from it; it operates, and must ever operate, by an absolute necessity of nature, by a most merciful appointment of that good and gracious Being, Who, when He tempers not the wind to the lamb, thickens the fleece against the wind; Who, when the abode is found unadapted to the inhabitant, gradually adapts the inhabitant to his abode; Who causes hardships, long endured, almost to assume the aspect of blessings, and leaves no region of the habitable globe so destitute of comfort and enjoyment, that those who dwell there cannot find abundant food for the patriot passion. Thanks be to Him, who thus equalizes the happiness of His children, and, by the reconciling power of habit, compensates for the apparent inequality of circumstance! Far be it from me to wish that it should be otherwise; pleasant is it to see the pulse of patriotism beating not less high and warm in the dweller of the rude clay cabin, on the bleak and barren moor, than in the inmate of the neat cottage home, in the warm valley, or on the fertile plain; pleasant is it to find the inhabitant of the mountain chalet

proud of his country, and contented with his lot, though the vine-covered hills and gay valleys, of a richer, and, as some might deem it, a happier land, be stretched beneath him.

> "Dear is that hut to which his soul conforms,
> And dear that hill that lifts him to the storms."

All that I mean to say, is, that true patriotism will spring from something additional to, and better than, mere use and habitude; that it will have its source, in part at least, from a thoughtful and grateful estimate of those peculiar blessings, with which it has pleased the Giver of all good to endow the land, (for what land has He left unendowed?) in which the patriot lives, and which He calls upon all the dwellers of that land, not merely to enjoy, but to improve. "Why has the great Father of all cast my lot," the true patriot will ask himself, "in this particular district of the peopled earth? Is it not that I may lend my aid in cultivating and improving, to the highest point, the natural advantages with which it abounds? in enlarging, exalting, and purifying the happiness, of those whose lot is cast with mine? in carrying forward to perfection, all those social institutions, by which it is sought to promote, and render permanent, the welfare of the community? in arresting and preventing, by every possible means, the growth of ignorance and vice, and promoting that of knowledge and virtue, throughout the land?"

Patriotism, thus grounded, not on mere egotistic vanity and local prejudice, nor yet, solely, on the natural and instinctive influence, however beneficial, of association and habit, but on a sober, thoughtful, and grateful

estimate of physical and social blessings, as well as a deep conviction, of the duty incumbent upon every man, to improve those blessings to the utmost, not only for the sake of the particular community of which he is a member, but of all the communities, that go with it, to make up God's great family; such patriotism is indeed a virtue not inconsistent with, but on the contrary introductory to, and constituting an indispensable portion of, that philanthropy, which folds the whole orb of sentient being in its wide embrace. Thus to live and die for one's country, not forgetting one's kind, is to resemble him, who prayed for, and wept over, Jerusalem, as he journeyed onward towards that cross, on which he was to be lifted up, that "he might draw all men unto him." Amen.

IX.

ON PATRIOTISM.

2.

PSALM CXXII. 6–9.

"PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM: THEY SHALL PROSPER THAT LOVE THEE. PEACE BE WITHIN THY WALLS, AND PROSPERITY WITHIN THY PALACES. FOR MY BRETHREN'S AND COMPANIONS' SAKE, I WILL NOW SAY, PEACE BE WITHIN THEE. BECAUSE OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD OUR GOD, I WILL SEEK THY GOOD."

PATRIOTISM, I have observed, is a reasonable affection, since finite beings, in their progress towards the universal, must begin, with the particular, and are most likely to act energetically and powerfully for the good of all, when their charity is called forth, in the first instance, with peculiar fervour, towards those who come most within the field of its active operations. A love, which knows no preferences, would lose much time in the selection of its objects, and would be liable to constant distractions. It is well for us, that we have a home and a country, relatives, friends, and fellow-citizens, our intenser love for whom, gives to our active benevolence, an early and definite direction, and ensures the vigorous commencement of a beneficial agency, the sphere of whose activity will widen, as the power of filling it in-

creases. The Infinite and Omnipotent God may love all alike, but we must be satisfied, if our love gradually expands, with our knowledge and our power. Nor shall we forget, that the patriotic is a christian, as well as a rational affection, enforced by the bright example of our Lord, and harmonizing, altogether, with the spirit of his religion. I also noticed that the true patriot, while deeply grateful for those physical and social blessings, with which it has pleased God, in His mercy, to endow his country, is ever imbued with a solemn sense and deep conviction, of the duty, incumbent upon him, to use those blessings aright, and, so far as in him lies, to add to their number and their value.

Let me further point out some of the modes in which patriotism, springing from a source so pure, will manifest itself. And, in the first place, it will dictate a well-weighed, true, and impartial expression of opinion, respecting the character and merits of the patriot's country,—her natural advantages, her laws and institutions, the habits and manners of her people, and everything connected with her. The true patriot will be as incapable of acting the flatterer's part, as the true friend. Knowing that everything finite is imperfect, he will not be slow to believe, or unwilling to acknowledge, that the land he lives in has its deformities and faults, as well as its beauties and excellences. There may be a worm in the bud, of what his partiality has led him to regard, as the fairest flower of the earth,—a flaw, in what he has been wont to account the first gem of the sea, and where this is the case, he will not fail to confess, as soon as he detects it. To overestimate and overstate

the merits of that which we admire and love, is to endanger its future depreciation, in the esteem of those, who may at first lend a favourable ear to our panegyrics. Undeserved, or undue praise, is sure to sicken in the long-run, and often induces, in those who have been deceived by it, a blindness even to real excellence. In this case, as in all others, the proverb holds good, that "the lip of truth shall be established, but the lying tongue is but for a moment."

Experience has probably taught most of us, that if we would have others love that which we love, our true policy, is to keep within the mark in our description of it, and that if our wish is, that anything should be *undervalued*, our surest and safest plan is to overpraise it. Thus it is that many a well-written book, many an excellent character, or, to advert to the immediate subject of our present reflections, many a fair, bright land, has been sunk below par, in the esteem of those who have not enjoyed the means of forming an independent judgment, by the folly of extravagant panegyrists. Free America, La Belle France, great and glorious England, the Emerald Isle herself, have rather lost than gained, by the unqualified praises of men, who have mistaken partiality and exclusiveness for patriotism, and who have lost sight of the wise man's judicious counsel,—no less applicable when we speak of that which is our own, than when we descant on ourselves:—"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." Flattery almost always frustrates its own purposes, and excites loathing, where it means to conciliate regard; and even honest and cordial praise,

if it would be believed, must learn to temper the feelings to the judgment, rather than submit the judgment to the feelings.

In our native land, as in the sacred home in which our kindred dwell, or in the character and conduct of the friend we love, let us by all means be quick to see, and prompt to acknowledge, and happy to fix attention on, all that is truly good; but let us also remember that our blindness, whether voluntary or involuntary, to errors and defects, will not make others blind, but, on the contrary, may, not improbably, render them more sharpsighted to discern, and more severe to animadvert upon them. Extremes are wont to generate each other. The undue severity of the jury, has, not unfrequently, had its origin in the obvious partiality of the judge, and the flatterer's extravagant eulogy, has suggested the true account of his hearer's not less unreasonable prejudice.

In our judgments both of men and things, of individuals and communities, even love itself will lose its value, if truth do not go hand in hand with it. In praising, as in acting, Hamlet's admirable rule holds good, "O'erstep not the modesty of nature;" "anything overdone is from the purpose," and, though it may please "the unskilful, cannot but make the judicious grieve." Both *to* our country and *of* our country, as to our friends and of our friends, if we love it truly, and have its best interests at heart, we shall speak neither more nor less, than, after keen observation and due reflection, we truly think. The "honest chronicler," who "nothing extenuates, nor sets down aught in ma-

lice," but speaks of men and things *exactly as they are*, or, at least, as he believes them to be, is not only the most credible, but the most useful also. His "religious truth and modesty," while they gain a respectful hearing and a ready belief, for all that he asserts, give weight and efficacy, both to his censure and his approbation. Whether he praises or blames, men listen; for they know that his praise and blame, are not, like those of the flatterer or the maligner, mere frothy and deceitful words.

But, perhaps, it will be said, that the opinions of an individual, however carefully weighed and truthfully expressed, or the contrary,—whatever influence they may exert, in the narrow circles of private life, over the minds of relatives and friends, cannot do much, either to promote or to retard, the prosperity of nations. The history of nations, I would reply, proves, on the contrary, the great and often unduly extensive influence of individual opinion. The many are almost always led by the few, and those few, not unfrequently, by no means the wisest. With how little wisdom the world is governed, is so common a topic of declamation, that it has ceased to excite surprise. That rulers and legislators often lack talent, is notorious. Their deficiency in this respect, however, might be much more cheerfully borne, if they were only, in the main, honest and true men, faithful in the few things with which Providence has entrusted them. Let no man take it for granted, that what he thinks and says can be of no public benefit or injury. In the revolutions of the wheel of fortune, he will perhaps find, upon reflection, that less talented men

than he, have often risen to an eminence of station, and exercised, for good or evil, powers that, in the outset of their course, they never dreamed of possessing; and even if it should be otherwise, if he should never rise above a lowly station, let every honest man remember, that the voice of his head, and heart, and lips, will have its portion of influence, however small, in the formation and guidance of that most powerful of all human agencies, public opinion. There cannot be a greater error, than to suppose that our public duties may be safely dispensed with, provided only our private ones are duly performed; that we may be indifferent patriots, and yet lay claim to the character of virtuous men. To his country, and not to his country only, but also to his kind, every man owes duties, which ought to be not less sacred in his estimation, than those to which his family and friends lay claim; and amongst those duties, not the least incumbent, is the honest expression of his sentiments, on all those subjects, on the right understanding of which, he has reason to think that the welfare of his fellow-citizens, and his fellow-men, will, in any degree, depend.

The true patriot then, in the first place, like the true friend, will utter no glozing flatteries,—will prophesy no smooth and deceitful things, in the ears of the country that he loves; but will speak of her and address her always, in those 'words of truth and soberness,' *from* which she may derive benefit, *by* which, at the very least, she cannot be injured. Of her peoples, her laws, her institutions, strongly as his heart may incline him to speak in the spirit of love, for that very love which

he bears her, he will speak likewise in the spirit of truth, —"still pleased to praise, yet not afraid to blame."

I observe, secondly, that the true patriot will be the lover and promoter of peace, both within, and beyond, the boundaries of his native land. His first prayer, like the Psalmist's, will be, "Peace be within thee." In families, consisting only of a small number of individuals, the elements and materials of discord exist in abundance, and, wherever a wholesome self-restraint is wanting, are called, without fail, into active operation. Various and conflicting opinions, feelings, dispositions, tastes, are sure to generate dissension, where the cementing power of mutual love is not of the very strongest kind. Happily, however, this often *is* the case; and when it is, those very varieties, that threatened the dissolution, constitute no small portion of the benefit, of union. Opposite qualities of mind and heart modify, correct, improve each other; thought wakens thought, feeling excites feeling; where perfect sympathy would have been slumber, partial difference gives vigour and animation; and all find themselves ultimately better, for having been closely linked with those, with whom, fondly as they loved them, they could not perfectly agree.

And so will it be with those larger families,—nations. They, too, are often made up of very different, and, apparently, discordant elements. Under one rule are gathered various tribes of men, most variously characterized, sprung from different roots, exhibiting strongly-discriminated peculiarities of physical and mental constitution, and so differently trained, by the education of place and circumstance, as to become still more

dissimilar than they originally were: here, hardy, adventurous, roving mountaineers; there, peaceful, plodding, stationary cultivators of the plain; here, a race of men distinguished by their phlegmatic coolness and forethought; there, another not less remarkable for the opposite qualities of warmth and fervour of feeling, haste of judgment and vehemence of impulse; all nevertheless united, it may be, under one government, and evidently intended by Him, Who portioned the earth amongst His children, and marked the bounds of their habitations for them, to stand, though apart, yet in close neighbourhood, and near relation to each other. And wherefore? Was it, think you, that their different qualities of mind and character, their various habits, tastes, pursuits, might alienate them from each other, and involve them in perpetual hostility? Was it not rather that the very opposite result might happen?—that near neighbourhood might lead to frequent and friendly association? and that the consequence of such association might be, to render each party beneficial to the other;—to harmonize the discordant elements of character;—to infuse, for instance, into the breasts of the rashly adventurous, a portion of their neighbours' prudence, and to invigorate the minds of the unduly cautious, on the other hand, with a generous dash of their neighbours' spirit of adventure;—to teach the phlegmatic to give motive power to thought, by mingling it with feeling,—and to induce the ardent, to impart value and dignity to feeling, by mingling it with thought? Surely *this* was the great Ordainer's object. In His larger, as in His smaller families, in kingdoms as in

households, He combines different materials, chiefly, if not wholly, for the sake of their mutual beneficial action,—of their final happy amalgamation. His intention is, that all the different notes shall, at length, be so arranged, as to make a harmony. On this conviction, it seems to me, that the true patriot will act. "Peace be within thee" will be his constant prayer for his native land. The jealousies and rivalries of opposite parties and factions in the State, he will do his utmost to abate and compose. To bring those parties into close and friendly contact,—to direct the notice of each to the qualities in which the other excels, and in which it is itself defective,—to encourage and enable them to blend and modify their varying characteristics for the common good,—to make, in short, of the many different communities, into which the whole people is divided, one united nation, one compact and powerful body, only the more so, for the variety of the blended, yet harmonizing materials, that compose it; this will be the true patriot's aim. He will be no exasperator of petty feuds, no cheerer-on of hostile parties, no magnifier of minute differences, no reviver of worn-out disputes, no reminder of forgotten insults. He will seek peace within the body politic, as one of the most fruitful sources and most powerful safeguards of its prosperity.

And for reasons of a similar nature, and little less cogent, he will be the friend and promoter likewise of peace without,—of friendly intercourse with all surrounding nations. Wherefore, think you, has the great Father of our race distributed His children so variously over the earth's surface? Why has He made them

severally the inhabitants of regions, that differ so widely from each other, in climate, soil, productions,—in all those outward circumstances, by which, not merely their physical, but their intellectual and moral natures, are, of necessity, differently modified? Was it, think you, as some seem to suppose, that He might alienate them from each other, that He might provoke to mutual hostility, that He might supply them—in that variety of precious commodities with which their different lands abound—with motives for mutual invasion, plunder, fratricide? And was it indeed Thy will, O Father, that Thy own children should hate each other's persons? lay violent hands upon each other's property? spill each other's blood? Pardon, oh pardon the blasphemous supposition! Well do we know that it was not so: well do we know that Thou lovest Thy children, all of them, and that Thou hast meant and made them, therefore, to love each other. It was for the express purpose that they might do so the more, that each might feel the other, not merely useful but needful, to him, that Thou didst so variously endow them with physical, intellectual, moral wealth. It was obviously Thy will that all should have something to impart, as well as something to receive,—something wherewith to gratify, as well as something to feel grateful for. Therefore was it that Thou didst leave none of Thy children dowerless,—none destitute of wealth of some kind, to offer in exchange for that of a different nature, which their brethren are privileged to tender to them. Therefore is it that Thou hast ribbed the mountains of the north with iron, and sowed the sands of the south with gold-dust;

that Thou hast caused fruits and spices to grow in the east, and hast thickened the fleeces of the cattle that whiten the western plains. It is not by Thy will, but by our wickedness, that robbery and fratricide exist. It is only because we forget the relation in which we stand to Thee as children, that we also forget the fraternal tie that binds, or ought to bind, us to each other.

We shudder, ourselves, at the thought of invading a *brother's* property, or imbruing our hands in a brother's blood; but we lose sight of the truth that we have a Father in heaven, as well as fathers upon earth, and that, in virtue of our common relation to Him, every son of man is as truly a brother, as derivation from the same parent source can make him. Ah, my friends, we call God our Father, but it is quite evident that we do not feel, as well as know Him to be so, so long as *war*—which, when it is not strictly defensive, is but another name for fratricide, for the murder of His children and our brethren,—receives any countenance from us. "Peace be within thee,"—"peace be around thee," will be the true patriot's prayer.

Considering all nations as different families, sprung from one paternal stock, "made of one blood, to dwell together on the face of the same earth," and variously endowed, for the express purpose of inducing the constant interchange of love and kindness, a true patriot will deprecate all needless hostility, on the part of him who causes or prolongs it, as an infraction of the common Father's will. Free, familiar, fraternal intercourse, between the children of his own and every other branch, he will feel himself bound, for the Father's sake, to Whom

he cannot but know that every child is dear, so far as in him lies, to foster and promote. I will only add here, may God hasten the arrival of those last and best days, spoken of by his prophet, "when the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it;" when "He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; when nations shall not lift up sword against nations, neither shall they learn war any more." Oh come, Lord Jesus, Thou Prince of Peace; come quickly! Amen.

X.

ON PATRIOTISM.

3.

PSALM CXXII. 6–9.

"PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM: THEY SHALL PROSPER THAT LOVE THEE. PEACE BE WITHIN THY WALLS, AND PROSPERITY WITHIN THY PALACES. FOR MY BRETHREN'S AND COMPANIONS' SAKE, I WILL NOW SAY, PEACE BE WITHIN THEE. BECAUSE OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD OUR GOD, I WILL SEEK THY GOOD."

IT will be a primary object with the true patriot, I have observed, to cherish the spirit of mutual love, and to promote the most unrestricted, liberal, and cordial interchange of good offices between all classes of his fellow-countrymen. Englishman, Hibernian, Cambrian, and Scot, associate profitably together, and the more amicably and intimately they do so, the greater will be their happiness, and the more perfect, we may reasonably hope, will be that national character, to which each will not fail to contribute some distinctive element. The prayer of the Psalmist, therefore, will be the prayer of every true patriot for his native land. "For my brethren's and companions' sake, I will say, Peace be within thee."

Nor will he be unanxious for the peace of the nations

around. As individual to individual, and family to family, and city to city, and district to district, so is nation, in the comprehensive plan of the All-Wise Disposer, designed to be subsidiary and supplementary to nation. As there is no man, so there is no community of men, that has not some peculiar contribution, of greater or less value, to offer to the sum of human happiness. Mutual dependence is the divinely appointed condition of our race, and that absolute independence, which, in our pride and folly, we sometimes wish, or pretend to wish for, would prove little better, if we could obtain it, than absolute destitution. Insulation, whether to individuals or communities, is always poverty. If we are to be rich at all, the Universal Father has ordained that we can only be so, by the fraternal interchange of those commodities that we severally possess. He never meant to make us happy apart. "Nature," as the Poet says, —and Nature is but another name for the Ordaining God,—"denies or damps an undivided joy." To "stand alone in our glory" would be to stand alone in our misery. When we are rich in friends and associates, we are rich indeed, for their riches become ours, and ours theirs; each imparts a little, and receives much.

Knowing this, the true patriot desires to see his country, not merely at peace with the nations around, but bound to them by the closest bonds of amity, freely interchanging with them the wealth both of the body and the mind,—imparting liberally what she can spare, and receiving gratefully what they can impart. This, he knows, is to fulfil the will of God, who, having "made of one blood all nations of men to dwell together on the

face of the earth," can no more approve of injury and outrage, on a large scale than on a small one, or tolerate war and bloodshed, rapine and fraud, between whole families of His children, than between individual members of those families. What! if Cain kill Abel, some call it murder, and hear the voice of a brother's blood crying unto God, from the ground upon which it was shed? But if under rival Cains, whole clans unite,—clans of brethren, be it remembered,—and make the earth swim with each other's blood, has no murder been committed? and is no voice heard, crying from the ground into which their blood has sunk, unto Him Who made them all? The true patriot will not believe it. Peace between nation and nation, between family and family, he will be not less anxious to promote, than between man and man.

While he will rejoice to see his country at peace with the nations around, deriving from them, in the reciprocation of friendly intercourse, all the benefits and blessings that they have it in their power and will to bestow, the true patriot will have no desire to see her exalted or enriched, at their expense. As, in the conduct of his private affairs, he would scorn to benefit himself, by taking the smallest unfair advantage of his neighbour, and would regard such a benefit, as, in truth, a greater injury, even to himself, than to the person injured, so would he grieve to see his native land, building her prosperity on the downfall or disasters, or even profiting by the needless privations, of bordering realms. Such prosperity, he is well aware, rests on no sure foundation;—unfair advantages are almost certain to

be followed by reprisals. The neighbourhood of those whom we have injured or impoverished, is never safe: they will doubtless watch their opportunity to reclaim, or to retaliate: and more than usually fortunate shall we be, if no negligence or mischance on our part, no unguarded hour, or unforeseen concurrence of adverse circumstances, enable them, sooner or later, to do so with success. Only let sufficient time elapse, and the gains of rapacity and injustice, are almost certain to be fully compensated by the losses. Even a weak enemy has often been known to inflict a summary and severe revenge.

How obvious, then, is it, that the commerce of benevolence, by which all parties are enriched and none impoverished, all benefited and blessed, and none injured and offended, is the true interest of all! What we thus gain in the mutual interchange of kindness, we may reasonably regard as the sure earnest of future and greater gains; but what we acquire by the right, as it is called—rather should we term it the *wrong*—of conquest,—what we wrest from the hands of other men by violence, oppression, or fraud,—will be to them, let us remember, both an excuse and a motive, to wrest more, should the opportunity offer, in their turn, from us. It is the true policy, not less of nations than of individuals, (strange that they should only now be beginning to discover it!) to do to each other as they would be done by,—to promote each other's prosperity, as the surest mode of promoting their own. In private life, this is clearly seen. Here, thanks to the influence of Christianity, the folly of the monkey policy of plunder-

ing each other's baskets, of increasing one's own by diminishing one's neighbour's wealth, is pretty generally understood. Happy will it be for the world, when the rulers of the nations shall understand it likewise, and become fully aware, that God's law of mutual love is laid down as authoritatively, and would be sure to operate as beneficially, for nations, as for the families and individuals that compose them.

There was a time when the dwellers of the same land, fancying that they had opposite interests, and that, by rivalry, they should increase or maintain their strength, entrenched and fortified themselves in separate dwellings, and forbade their children, and vassals, and retainers, to hold friendly intercourse; but these feudal follies are now heard of no more. The drawbridge, if there still is one, is never raised; the rusty cannon, if they still peer from the mouldering fortifications, are never heard to speak; and the drained moat has become a grassy vale, or flowery garden, in which the young descendants of the once haughty rivals meet and play together. And so it will be, I would fain hope, at no very distant day, with those rivals on a larger scale, who still keep up the always-losing game of war. As those clans and factions, that once rent the bosom of our own and other lands, have already found that division is weakness, and union strength, and that they can be wealthier and happier with each other's aid than without, so will it be, I would fain hope, ere long, with those larger communities of which they form a part. The fact, that the *tribes* have learned to live in love and harmony, may strengthen our faith in the prophetic

word, that the time is coming when "the *nations* shall not learn war any more;" and we may look forward, I trust, to the day, as not very far distant, when our descendants shall look upon the mouldering ruins of fortified frontiers and embattled coasts, with feelings similar to those excited in our minds, by the turreted and moated castles of our ancestors,—feelings of wonder, that the manifold blessings of good neighbourhood and social fellowship, should have been so little understood in the olden times, and of joy, that this ignorance has passed away, and that the children, through the mercy of God and the lessons of His Providence, have become wiser than their fathers.

In connection with this subject, let me not omit to remark, that between nations, as between men, the spirit of contention has been greatly fostered, by the too prevalent propensity, to neglect positive, in the pursuit of comparative merit, to allow the love of excelling, to take precedence in the mind, of the love of excellence. In their aspirations after what they have called glory,—in their ambition to outvie one another in power, wealth, and splendour,—communities, like individuals, have too often sacrificed that real happiness, which flows from mutual friendship, and the joint pursuit, in an unenvious and harmonious spirit, of the common good. If our object is merely to stand higher than our neighbours, that object may be effected, and often doubtless more easily, by lowering them, than by raising ourselves; and hence the inducement, to throw obstructions in the way of their advancement, or even to inflict positive injuries upon them.

Aware of this, the true patriot, while he will excite his countrymen to diligent employment, and multiplication, of all those resources, from which national prosperity and happiness spring, will forbear to awaken unfriendly feelings towards other nations by invidious comparisons.

That his native land may be "great, glorious, and free;" that she may reap abundantly of the fruits of the earth in their season; that the labours of her artisans may be rewarded by a large increase; that, with the surplus of her own possessions, she may have it in her power, to purchase freely of the commodities that surrounding nations can supply; and, above all, that knowledge and virtue, diffused amongst her inhabitants, may confer upon all other blessings a priceless value, that they could not have without them;—for these things, the patriot's prayer will freely and frequently ascend: but that his land may be wealthier, wiser, more virtuous, or happier than other lands; that she may bloom the fairest amongst the flowers, or shine the brightest amongst the gems,—this he will not presume to ask of impartial Heaven: for her, as for himself, he will seek only positive good, and will leave it, humbly and implicitly, to the All-Wise Disposer, to appoint her comparative position, as He will. To sit on the right hand or the left of the Father, as it is not for man to give, so is it not for man to ask; enough for us to know that it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. For our country as for ourselves, let our petition be,—that she may do her duty; that she may fulfil her mission; that she may hold, with honour, the place assigned to her amongst the nations of the earth.

Perhaps some one may feel inclined to remind me of a prayer sometimes offered up by us,—that amongst those nations her name may be great. The expression may be open to misconception: that we may not misconceive it, let us always bear in mind, that *positive*, not comparative greatness, is what we implore for our dear native land; a greatness which may continue to be hers, though all the nations around should rise to an equal level; though all distinctions should be lost, in that flood of knowledge, virtue, and happiness, which,—and I trust, it is the heart's desire of every one of us,—may, at some future day, "cover the earth, as the waters cover the deep places of the sea." True patriotism, then, will not be invidiously comparative. It will, indeed, teach him who feels it, to appreciate justly, and to acknowledge gratefully, the blessings that he enjoys in the land of his nativity; but it will induce no wish to frown contempt on other lands, or to undervalue the peculiar bounties, with which they may have been enriched by a kind Providence,—to whom all are dear, and by whom none are left portionless, since all are alike His children.

Amongst the blessings, which the true patriot would call down upon his country, by his prayers, and lend his utmost aid in procuring for her, by his personal exertions, none will rank so high in his estimation, as the intellectual and moral welfare, and progress, of her inhabitants;—to see the stores of her wealth augmented, to witness the increase of the produce of her soil, of the results of her manufacturing industry, of the inflowing and outflowing riches of her merchandise, will, doubtless, give pleasure to his mind; but much more

will he rejoice to witness the diffusion of that knowledge, virtue, and pure and undefiled religion, amongst her inhabitants of every class, which alone can qualify them, to convert into substantial and enduring wealth, the gross and perishable materials, of a happiness, that, without them, will prove to be little better than vanity and vexation of spirit. To this end, then, his principal efforts will be directed, his most powerful exertions put forth. To accomplish this all-important object, to make his countrymen wiser and better, will be the first wish of the true patriot's heart,—the chief labour of the true patriot's life. Need I say, then, that he will not neglect the only means by which he can labour efficiently in such a field,—that he will add practice to precept, and prove the sincerity of his patriotism, by showing himself, according to the full measure of the ability that God has given him,—a wise and good man. Amen.

XI.

FREE TRADE IN THE TREASURES OF THE BODY AND THE MIND, THE INTEREST AND DUTY OF CHRISTIANS.*

JOHN IV. 9.

"THE JEWS HAVE NO DEALINGS WITH THE SAMARITANS."

THIS fact is mentioned by the Evangelist, to account for the surprise expressed by the woman of Samaria, that Jesus, being a Jew, should ask drink of her. That his own disciples, had they been present, would not have felt less surprise, we learn from the astonishment, which, as their fellow-disciple, John, assures us, pervaded their minds, though they forbore to give utterance to it, when they found that their Master had even entered into conversation with one of that hated race. Though none of them said, "What seekest thou, or why talkest thou with her?"—yet, "they marvelled that he talked with the woman." Would not their surprise have been increased, if they had heard him asking a favour of her, —if they had seen him accepting from her hands the

* This sermon was first preached during the Anti-Corn-law agitation, in June, 1842, and published three years later, in 1845, at the wish of many who heard it.

refreshing beverage,—and that, too, the water of the very well from which their great Patriarch himself had drunk, with his children and his cattle? Was it not bad enough, that Jacob's well should be *in the possession* of Samaritans? And could a Jew, one of Jacob's own legitimate descendants, in whose veins the Patriarch's blood ran pure, deign to receive a cup of its sacred waters, from the hands of one of this half-heathen—this abhorred people?

Such are the reflections, which—whether they might, or might not, have dared to utter them,—would, not improbably, have passed through the minds of the disciples, if they had heard the request, breathing more of the spirit of true benevolence, perhaps, than many a munificent donation,—"Give me to drink." A favour asked, often indicates more real kindness, than a favour given; and when Jesus sought and accepted, at the hands of the Samaritan woman, a cup of cold water, he afforded an illustration of this remark, which will not be forgotten, so long as the Gospel shall be preached in the world.

True he was a Jew,—but he was a Jew who had learned, that to be a man, was a greater thing than to be a Jew; that the brotherhood of humanity constitutes a close and indissoluble tie,—a tie which party-rage should not be allowed to sever, nor prejudice of any kind, personal, local, national, or sectarian, to dissolve. He was that Jew, who was to teach all mankind how to worship God acceptably, without priest, temple, or sacrifice. He was that Jew, in whose name it was to be proclaimed to the world, that "God is no respecter of persons; but

that in every land, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." He was that Jew, according to whose law, "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature;" in whose kingdom "there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all." Being such a one, it was no wonder, that he followed the dictates of his own large and generous heart, in opposition to all the evil customs and conventionalities of his own countrymen and the world; and seeing that there was no law of *God* to forbid, began the commerce of benevolence, despite of Jewish censure and prejudice, with a woman of Samaria; and, that he might greatly benefit her and hers, consented, not merely to receive, but to solicit, a small benefit himself. "Give me to drink," said he; and when she expressed her surprise, his motive became apparent, for he answered and said unto her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink,' thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

Previously to that time, the Evangelist tells us that there had been no dealings (no friendly dealings, we are doubtless to understand,—none but such as the coarse motive of self-interest might prompt,) between the Jews and the Samaritans. If so, that day, doubtless, was marked, for ever after, in white letters upon their calendar, when this absurd and wicked non-intercourse Act, or Custom, was broken through, and the children of Samaria first heard, what a Son of Judæa had both the power and the will to do for them. Oh! how productive

of good was the two days' tarrying, that succeeded that brief interchange of kindness and good offices on the well's brink! And what abundant cause had the inhabitants of Sychar to rejoice, that their countrywoman had not turned a deaf ear, or listened with an incredulous mind, to one who carried the heart of a well-wisher and a friend, under what she had been always taught to look upon as the garb of a foe! Well rewarded was she for that courtesy, with which her woman's heart had prompted her to return a stranger's greeting, when she heard her countrymen say, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

Nor, let it be said, that the advantage, in this instance, was all on one side. Jesus evidently thought otherwise. He had sown seed, and even while he was looking on the spot, it sprang up before his eyes, and became white unto the harvest; and he turned round to his disciples, and promised that he would make them sharers in his joy, and that they should have the reaping of it. "He that reapeth," said he, "receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together." So full was the joy that he felt in the prospect of his success, that even the bodily wants, which he had expressed a short time before, were forgotten; and when his disciples prayed him to eat, he declined, saying, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Misunderstanding his meaning, they said one to another, "Hath any man brought him anything to eat?" His reply was, "My meat is to do the

will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work." In the very success that attended his exertions, the pious and benevolent mind of Jesus found an ample recompense. Not even to *him* was the commerce of kindness without its profit.

To his disciples, on this occasion, it was probably more profitable still. They had something to learn as well as to teach: prejudices had grown up in *their* minds, not less necessary to be removed, than those from which they undertook to relieve the minds of the Samaritans. Amongst these hitherto despised people, upon one of whose villages, two of their number once wished to call down fire from heaven, they would, doubtless, be surprised to find so many prepared, by docile and virtuous dispositions, to welcome the Messiah. Not less useful than grateful to them, would be their discovery of intellectual and moral excellence, where they had never expected to discover, or perhaps even thought of looking for it. For the removal of groundless prejudice, there is no recipe like that of Philip, "Come and see;" and the residence of the disciples, for two days, in a town of Samaria, would probably do more to infuse into their hearts kindly feelings towards the Samaritans, and to incline them to preach the Gospel to them, in that spirit of love and zeal, in which the Gospel always should be preached, than the hearing or perusal of the most elaborate and eloquent apology for them could have done.

In speaking of the prejudices which he had once conceived against Dr. Priestley, and the speedy dispersion of them, in what he expressly characterizes as "the mild and genial sunshine" of his presence, Dr. Parr

beautifully observes, that if it be painful to abandon, (as we sometimes feel ourselves compelled to do,) confidence for distrust, and esteem for disapprobation, "those pangs, through the wise and gracious providence of God, are amply compensated, by the effects which we feel from the opposite transition." "The discovery, even of our own errors, is then," he adds, "most grateful to us. The understanding co-operates with the heart, in fixing our attention upon the brighter side of character. The pleasures of novelty itself, are not exhausted at once. Every unkind prepossession drops off without effort, and every lurking suspicion is reviewed and dismissed at the tribunal of reason. The whole mind, as if relieved from a long and galling pressure, at one moment reposes in security, and at another expands with joy. It deeply receives every favourable impression, which is made upon it by a new and juster view of things; and while we fondly contemplate the intellectual or moral excellencies of other men, we secretly exult in the consciousness of our own sagacity, exercised and improved by our own benevolence."

Similar to the feelings, thus—not less accurately than eloquently—described, were probably those of the companions of Jesus, at the conclusion of their short but pleasant sojourn in Sychar. "These Samaritans, after all," we may imagine them saying to each other, "are a much better people than we thought them. Our Master was right,—when indeed have we known him otherwise?—in thinking that something might be made of them. A good Samaritan we know now, for we have seen, is not the mere creation of his benevolent mind,

existing only in that beautiful parable which he told us. Out of the number of those who besought us so earnestly to tarry with them, and treated us so hospitably and kindly while we stayed, and so frankly and fully confessed our Master's Messiahship, manifesting, in this respect, more faith than we have often been able to meet with even in Israel; surely, out of this number, we might easily select many more good Samaritans than one. Henceforth we must be more kind and cautious in our judgments, and hope better things of those of whom we know nothing, albeit we may have heard evil of them."

And will you tell me, my friends, that in learning such a lesson as this, the disciples derived no benefit, from these, their first "dealings with the Samaritans?" Put the hospitality out of the question,—the pleasurable feelings excited by the interchange, even for two short days, of good offices and friendly sympathies,—and who will say that these are nothing?—and the strong probability is, that even in the mere abatement of prejudice, the disciples gained, I will not say an equivalent, but no mean return for the priceless benefits they imparted. They preached the Gospel to their brethren at Sychar; were they not well rewarded, if they felt the spirit of brotherhood, which is the spirit of the Gospel, diffusing itself more widely, and making itself more warmly felt in their own hearts? Truly it was much to be lamented, that both Jews and Samaritans had so long lost the benefit of friendly dealings with each other; and *that* event was a glorious and a joyful one which broke down the partition wall between them, (a

protection wall, perhaps, they foolishly thought it,) and brought them together once more.

It is very seldom a good thing, my friends, for men to have no dealings with each other. Few are so poor, as to have nothing valuable to offer in exchange for the good things with which others may have it in their power to enrich them; few are so altogether evil, as to render it desirable to cut them off, like lepers, from the social body, with which the all-wise Disposer, doubtless for some wise purpose, has connected them. Should there be a wholly withered and useless branch upon the human tree, doubt not but the great Husbandman will prune it off at the proper season: no conspiracy of the branches against their poor sapless brother, is necessary to remind Him of His duty; nor need they refuse, while *He* permits, to afford the cooling shade, or to transmit the refreshing shower. Even in a son of the house of Jeroboam, "some good thing was found towards the Lord God of Israel;" and if He would only give us of His Spirit of wisdom and of love, there can be little doubt that we should often detect the germs of virtue, where, at present, we perceive only the sin and folly, that prevent their disclosure and their growth.

Wherefore did Jesus so frequently seek the companionship of publicans and sinners? To do them good, you will say;—true; but to do them good by means of that good which he was so quick-sighted to discover in them. Had there been no foundation of good to work upon, even he might have despaired of erecting a superstructure; but he knew what was in man, and he seldom, therefore, if ever, despaired. Even with the

"Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," he refused not to have dealings;—he reasoned with them, he reproved them, he said "alas! for them" from the bottom of his deep heart, and who shall pretend to say that his labour of love, even in their case, the most hopeless of all—(for what sin is there so deadening and desolating as hypocrisy!)—was not in some instances rewarded by a rich return? It is not for us, then, in any case to cut off our communication with any portion, even the most despised, of the human family, and to say that we will have no dealings with them; on the contrary, it is our duty to keep the channels of communication always open, that if the opportunity of doing—and doing always implies receiving—good should offer, we may avail ourselves of it.

"To do good and to communicate," says the apostolic precept, "forget not." What does this imply? Doubtless that we should extend our intercourse where it is possible, and where there is any likelihood of its proving beneficial, with every branch of the great family of man. For this extension of human intercourse, God has made great, and constantly growing provision. It is evidently His intention, that, as the race grows older, the several branches of it shall know more of, and act more upon, each other. As, in a single nation, children are trained apart in separate families, and under various influences, to go forth when they are men, and mingle together, and form, by mutual modification, a character that may be called national; so, in the advancing age of the species, shall the nations of the earth, those large families of men, so variously trained, so

variously endowed, availing themselves of the powerful means which God has ordained, means daily becoming more powerful,—commerce, literature, foreign travel,—meet and amalgamate, enlighten and improve each other, and form a character at length, superior to any merely local character,—a character that may be dignified with the name of human.

Look at the surface of the earth;—how evident is it that to unite the various tribes that dwell upon it, is a primary object of the great Creator! See how the ocean,—"the dissociating ocean," an ancient classic calls it, but never, in poetry or prose, was an epithet more erroneously applied,—unites the most distant realms, and the most different climates, and renders the interchange of their productions, not merely possible, but easy:—

"This band remotest nations joins."

Well has the Psalmist, in speaking of the great and wide sea, as full of the riches of God, adverted to the blessings of navigation,—"there go the ships." They are works of human art, it is true, but there cannot be a doubt that they exist by Divine appointment, and that the sea was as much designed to carry men over its surface, as to nourish the scaly brood within its deeps. Over the vast plain of ocean, we wend our easy way to every point of the circling shores, and, as we approach them, we see rivers, without number, offering their aid to conduct us, by roads not less easy, into the very heart of the distant lands in which our brethren dwell. These liquid paths God makes, and man imitates; and canals extend the blessings, while they tes-

tify to the value, of those rivers which hurry seawards, to lend their assistance in completing the work of love which the ocean has begun. Was the sea designed to separate us then? Ignorance only can imagine it. It joins the remotest races of the human family, as no other expedient, that we can think of, could have joined them.

But what shall we say of the rocky barriers that separate land from land,—of the "mountains interposed, that make enemies of nations, which had else, like kindred drops, been mingled into one?" Are not they, at least, meant to divide us from each other,—to portion us off into distinct regions, holding little or no communion? I doubt it much. The sublimities of nature serve rather to attract than to repel; the curiosity of the traveller is excited, his admiration is kindled, his energies are called forth by them, and many a mountain ridge is climbed, with painful steps and slow, for the sake of the feelings which the traveller experiences, when he dives into its deep dells, wanders by its lonely tarns, looks upward to its towering cliffs, or down upon the wide-spreading prospect which its heights command,—where a mere lowland district, even though rich and beautiful, would have been left untraversed. Do the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Apennines, serve only for division? To say nothing of their physical uses,—amongst which let us not forget, that they are the needful sources of those very rivers, of whose uniting power we have spoken,—have they not an attractive power upon minds? Does not the stranger often turn his longing eyes to them from afar, and, for their sake, has he not frequently

been known to make his first acquaintance with men of strange aspect and of unknown tongue, whom yet he has soon learned to love, because he has found that they have human hearts, and minds formed, like his own, in the image of the Deity? It is by no means an unknown, or even uncommon case, that to see mountains has been the first object, and the last result to find friends and brethren in men.

Talk not then of barriers,—the sublimities of nature are meant to draw us to each other. In accents that echo from one mountain summit to another, the Alps invite us to trace the steps of Carthaginian Hannibal and French Napoleon, and acquaint ourselves with the mighty nations, that spread wide at their base, and the simple people, that dwell in their verdant valleys, or on their rocky sides. With the voice of many waters, Niagara calls us to hold communion with our Transatlantic brethren; and, in sounds more familiar, Snowdon invites us to converse with the simple-minded descendants of the first dwellers of our land; Ben Lomond would fain persuade us to confer with Scotia's hardy sons and lively daughters; and Mangerton to learn by our own experience that Irish hearts are warm.

No, my friends; mountains interposed are no more designed to estrange the human family from each other, than seas or rivers. On the contrary, if the earth were a dead flat, or a smooth ball, we should want many powerful inducements, which we now have, to traverse its beautifully varied surface; and, in gratifying our curiosity respecting its grand physical phænomena, to

make ourselves acquainted, at the same time, with the mental and moral characteristics of its inhabitants.

Again, from the surface of our globe, turn your attention to its productions. Does the consideration of these, supply us with any reason for believing that the universal Father meant to make each particular district sufficient for itself? Has he cooped up his children like tame cattle, in their separate fields, and spread out before them an unvaried, but satisfying repast, and bade them to feed there in happy, but selfish and unsocial ignorance of their brethren, in neighbouring enclosures? Has he not, on the contrary, given them wants without number, that they cannot supply, and tastes that they cannot gratify, without ranging far and wide, and imparting of their own, that they may receive of others' wealth? Instead of forming them, as an ancient author expresses it, "prone and obedient to the belly," with downward looks, and minds that cannot range, any more than their eyes, beyond the spot of ground immediately beneath and around them, has he not given them an erect posture, and far-darting vision, and large desires for distant good, and minds that overleap all obstacles, and prompt and assist the body to do so too, in the pursuit of those objects on which their hearts are fully set?

And are these the beings whom we would limit to the produce of the spot on which, for the time being, they chance to dwell? They will not be so limited. In the state of barbarism they will seize, like uninstructed children, upon what they *have not*, but *desire to have*. As civilization advances, and the ungovern-

able cupidity of the child yields to the reason-regulated wishes of the man, commerce will succeed to war, exchange to robbery, and men will learn to barter what they want not, or less highly value, of their own, for those coveted possessions which others can be induced, by the price they offer, to impart. Free trade is the expedient which Reason suggests, and God approves, for gratifying honestly, the various and strong natural desires which He has implanted in the breasts of His children, for superseding that spirit of mutual aggression, violence, and plunder, to which, in the savage state, or childhood of the species, those desires lead; and for introducing to each other, in the character of mutual benefactors, men who, in less enlightened days, were known as envious witnesses of each other's prosperity, or lawless invaders of each other's rights.

It must be obvious to every one, who considers for a moment the state of things as it is, that God never intended any body of men, any more than any individual man, to be self-dependent. He has separated obviously that He might unite us. He has made our wants and our means of supplying them various, that we might supply each other. He has portioned the earth among us, and variously tempered the atmosphere and soil of each separate district, that each, rejoicing in its own peculiar productions, might have its acceptable contribution to make to the common store of all. Look at your tables, covered with food conveyed to you from every various region of the world, even the poorest amongst you seasoning your humble meal with condiments from different lands, refreshing yourselves occa-

sionally with foreign fruits, sending to the Indies for your sugar, and to China for your tea. Consider your clothing, often wrought for you by foreign artisans, or, even when native hands have wrought it in native looms, fabricated nevertheless from materials of foreign growth.

But, so far as the absolute necessaries of life are concerned, some one may perhaps inquire, May not and ought not nations to be independent,—can we not always draw our bread at least, the staff of life, from our own soil? Let us not be too certain that we can. The God of the seasons may not always be willing that we should. He may withhold the early or the latter rain; He may send His mildew or His blight, and reward our self-confidence with famine. Admirably has it been said by an enlightened statesman, that "to confine the consumer of corn to the produce of his own country, is to refuse to ourselves, the benefit of that provision which Providence itself has made, for equalizing to man the variations of season and of climate."

If the great families of the earth will live together in peace and love, in friendly and familiar intercourse, absolute destitution need never come on any; for the hand of God, mercy-restrained, smites only partially, and He loves to see us ministering, for each other, to the sorrows He has sent, healing for each other the wounds that He has inflicted. "Why," asks a poet,—

> "Why does the will of Heaven ordain
> A world so mixed with woe?
> Why pour down want, disease, and pain,
> On wretched men below?"

No less truly than beautifully does he answer his own question,—

"It was the will of God to leave
These ills for man to mend,
Nor let affliction pass the grave
Before it found a friend."

But ought we not to be on our guard against our enemies, lest, in case of our dependence on them, they should cut off our supplies? The very best mode of guarding against our enemies, I reply, is to treat them as our friends. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." This is the Christian plan, and, as far as I know, it is the best. Make yourself useful, to the utmost extent of your power, to other men, and doubt not, but that they will speedily become willing to be useful to you. Give them a fair equivalent for what *you* wish to procure, and *they* are willing to part with, and rest assured, that, for mere self-interest's sake, if from no better feeling, they will be disposed to treat with you, for what *you* are willing to part with, and *they* are anxious to procure.

Barter, it is true, is not exactly benevolence; but when carried on in an enlightened and liberal spirit, it partakes, in no small degree, of its nature, and is followed by not a few of its advantages. If it is not benevolence, it leads directly to it. It brings men together in a happy spirit. It makes them mutually useful to, and therefore mutually pleased with, each other. Justice and mercy are kindred virtues; and it not unfrequently happens, that the esteem, inspired by fair and liberal dealing, prompts to free and unbought kindness. Let an interchange of good offices be once established between man and man, and it will be a source of just

surprise, if either party long content himself with merely rendering an exact equivalent. Men like to improve upon each other's actions, to do more than has been done for them. "Give," says our Lord, "and it shall be given to you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom: for with the same measure that ye mete withal" (or even with a still better measure) "it shall be measured to you again."

The intercourses of commerce, let me further observe, when carried on as they ought to be, naturally lead to intercourses of a far more important nature, to communications of thought and feeling, wisdom and love. Therefore especially it is, that God has made no country sufficient for itself, nor withheld from any the power of contributing, in a greater or less degree, to the physical wealth of others. For where the wealth of the body circulates, that of the mind is almost sure to find an entrance. Free trade in earthly, leads to free trade in heavenly treasures. Where *man* has once gained a footing, *his thoughts* cannot easily be excluded, and though to barter the productions of his native land, animal, vegetable, or mineral, for those of the land which he visits, may be the avowed and primary object of the son of traffic, yet may the incidental benefits which he confers, by promoting an interchange of ideas, an intellectual and moral commerce, be attended by consequences infinitely more important. A few grains of truth, given or received, may be, and often doubtless have been, of more value than all the outward or the homeward cargo.

Hence to impose needless restrictions upon trade,—to forbid the free interchange even of perishable goods, is, in all probability, to inflict a much more serious evil, than that which first suggests itself. It is not merely to lessen the bodily comfort of man; it is to give a check to the progress of thought, and to cut asunder one of those cords, useful though it may be coarse, by which minds are brought within the sphere of each other's beneficial influence. Who can deny that civilization is promoted by commerce, and that the most valuable of a nation's exports, have often been those of which she took no account, and for which she asked no return,—the invisible and intangible riches of the minds of her children, conveyed in the memory, and transmitted by the pen or by the voice? Nor does it often happen that the profit of such traffic is all on one side. Barbarous, indeed, must be the community that can add nothing to the intellectual or moral store of the communities around, that can make no return, in kind, for the treasures of thought that it receives. If we give to our neighbours in this kind, so we may almost always gain from them. For this very reason, doubtless, has God constituted and trained us differently, and caused nations, as well as men, to exhibit such marked varieties of character, that all might have something to teach, as well as to learn, and that, in the education of the whole race, each distinct portion might be able to lend its separate aid.

Finally, allow me to observe, that if intercourse for secular purposes is chiefly valuable, and ought to be encouraged, for its indirect tendency to keep the chan-

nels of human thought and feeling open, and to promote the beneficial influence of men's minds and hearts upon each other, much more should every encouragement be given to the commerce of thought itself,—to the free and direct intercourse of mind with mind. Great cause of lamentation is there, when the embargo is laid on the most valuable of all commodities, when, though perishable goods are admitted into the market, truth,—and if truth, then virtue, (for virtue is the ripened fruit of truth; "Sanctify them by thy truth," said our Lord Jesus Christ,)—is excluded, by what are absurdly called protective duties. By free discussion only, can truth,—sanctifying and saving truth,—be fully elicited, firmly established, and widely diffused:—to forbid discussion, therefore, as some are disposed to do, from fear of error, is to forbid the divinely appointed means of good, lest the misemployment of them should lead to evil,—to withhold the needful food of the mind, lest from casual mixture with some noxious ingredient, or the imperfect digestion of the recipient, it should fail to nourish.

Of our intellectual, as of our bodily food, it may not always be possible for us to ascertain the exact quality, or regulate the quantity with due precision. It will not be wise, however, on this account, to resort to the plan of total abstinence,—which seems to be the policy of those who refrain from thinking at all, lest they should think wrongly; nor yet to act as others do, who select at random one kind of food, which they have been told is wholesome, or have assumed to be so without proof, and conclude that they shall be healthy

and long-lived, merely because their meals are never varied. The mind, on the contrary, like the body, craves and needs a variety, even of wholesome aliments; and the apostolic rule, if wisely followed, will do for both, "Prove all things,"—all things, that is, of which the quality is not obvious, and a test is at hand,—"and adhere to that which is good."

In intellectual, as in physical commerce, exclusive dealings are to be deprecated. The wise searcher after wisdom will visit all markets,—refuse to inspect no merchant's private stock,—lay his hand upon a good article, wherever it may be found,—nor be deterred from adding what is really valuable to his store, by any groundless disgust, or hasty prejudice, against him who offers it for sale. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Free trade in thought, it would appear, was especially forbidden. "The disciples marvelled that Jesus *talked* with the woman." Did either party gain by this exclusiveness? In all probability both parties lost much. Though "salvation was of the Jews,"—though on some important points their views were more correct,—though they better "knew what they worshipped," yet might they have learned something, if we may judge from the happy result of our Lord's visit to Sychar, from their Samaritan neighbours. Openness to conviction, gratitude for kindness, —these are lessons of no mean value, which even the strict Unitarians of Judæa, might have learned from the heterodox, but by no means wholly worthless, objects of their bitter hostility.

Ah, my friends, in this world we cannot afford to

cherish groundless hostility. Common prudence requires us to make our neighbours, if possible, our friends. We cannot tell how soon we may be called upon to solicit their kindly aid, and to feel, by sad experience, the truth of the proverb, "Better is a neighbour that is near, than a brother afar off." We cannot always be near those we love; shall we not do wisely, then, in causing those to whom we are near, to love us? How was it with the disciples in the case before us? In passing from Judæa into Galilee, "they must needs go through Samaria." Supposing the inhabitants of Sychar had refused to receive them, or supply them with food,—(an instance of the kind, you remember, is elsewhere recorded,)—would they have suffered no inconvenience from the refusal? Undoubtedly they would have suffered, for they were weary and hungry. Doubtless, then, they rejoiced, that both they and the Samaritans had broken through an evil custom, and begun, though late, to have dealings with each other. Let us go and do likewise. Both of the food of the body and of that of the mind, let us be willing to impart, let us be grateful to receive. We are brethren, let us act as brethren, that the love of our Father may be with us. Amen.

XII.

ONE UNIVERSAL FATHER, THE GLAD TIDINGS OF CHRIST TO THE NATIONS.

LUKE XI. 2.

"WHEN YE PRAY, SAY, 'OUR FATHER.'"

FOR the first clear revelation of the paternal character of God, we are indebted to the Gospel. To the Heathens there were many gods. The children of men, in their view, were not connected by the bond of brotherhood; they had not one Father; their heavenly, were not less numerous than their earthly lords, nor of less discordant attributes; and religion was to them, therefore, more frequently the source of dissension, than of union. With the Jews the case was certainly very different; they believed in one God, and in one only, by Whose "word the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth; Whom all the world should fear; of Whom all the inhabitants of the world should stand in awe." Nor was He unknown to them in His paternal character; on the contrary, they had often heard Him spoken of, as the Father of His people Israel:—"Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting:"—"O Lord, Thou art our

Father; we are the clay, and Thou our potter, and we are the work of Thy hands:"—"Have we not one Father? hath not one God created us?" Such was the common language of their prophets; nor could any child of Israel be ignorant, that the obedience which he was required to render, was *filial*, the obedience of a *son*, not less than that of a servant. "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master," says the prophet Malachi, in the name of Jehovah; "if I, then, be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" That God was a Father to him and his, no well-instructed Jew could doubt; but that He stood, in the same near relation, to those who were not of the family of Abraham; that they too were His children, His beloved children, as well as His creatures, dear to His heart, as well as formed by His hand,—this was a doctrine, with which few of the chosen people seem to have been familiar, and which, it is not wonderful, that their selfish prejudices should have rendered them slow to discover and reluctant to embrace.

There were indeed facts in their history, and precepts in their law, and promises in their prophets, which might have led them to such an inference, and a liberal and enlarged philosophy would, doubtless, have prepared their minds to discover, and their hearts to welcome it. The very promises given to Abraham, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed," might have proved to them, that the blessing was not intended for his seed alone. When they read in the book of Genesis, that the descendants of their great forefather, were not to enter upon the land of promise "till the fourth

generation, because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full," they must have discovered that it was the design of God, to harmonize the interests of Israel with those of other nations, and not to sacrifice the latter to the former. When they listened to the solemn declarations of Moses, that God had not chosen them for any peculiar excellence of theirs, or any exclusive partiality that He bore to them; when they recalled to memory, that clear and explicit assurance of their legislator,—"Understand, therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land, to possess it, for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiffnecked people, but for the wickedness of those nations, the Lord doth drive them out from before thee,"—they might surely have inferred, that, in the plan of Providence, the welfare of those nations was not overlooked, and that He Who thus interfered, when need was, to chasten, could never have forgotten, when wisdom and goodness gave permission, to bless them. When they remembered too, how the interests of the stranger were watched over, and provided for, in their law; when they heard or read such precepts as these, "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt:"*—"If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him; but the stranger that dwelleth with you, shall be unto you, as one born amongst you; and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God:†" "Hear the cause between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him.

* Exod. xxii. 21. † Lev. xix. 33, 34.

Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, but you shall hear the small, as well as the great; you shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's:"* and, once more :—"Behold, the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, is Jehovah's thy God; the earth also, with all that therein is. Only Jehovah had a delight in thy fathers, to love them; and He chose their seed after them, even you, above all people, as it is this day. Circumcise, therefore, your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked; for Jehovah your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, who regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye, therefore, the stranger; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt:"† when, I say, such precepts as these, breathing the spirit, and involving the grounds and reasons, of the most expansive philanthropy, were addressed to the disciple of Moses, it would not have been wonderful, if they had come to the conclusion, that the stranger, wherever he might dwell, was no less the beloved child of God, than themselves, and that their peculiar privileges were given to them, as riches are given to the wealthy, and wisdom to the wise, not less for others' benefit, than for their own. To this conclusion they must also have been led, by many passages in their own prophetic books, which spoke of blessings to flow to all nations from Judea; of a time, "in the last days, when the house of Jehovah shall be established on the

* Deut. i. 16, 17. † Deut. x. 14–19.

top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it; and many people shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob, and be instructed in His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem, and He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."*

But the Jews were not aware of the grandeur of their destiny; they were doing a work for the world, while they thought only of themselves; they were acting as efficient instruments, in the Universal Father's hand, for the good of their brethren, at the very time that their brethren were neglected or despised by them, shunned, and stigmatized as common and unclean. By the Divine command, they had kindled a beacon light on the surf-beaten cliff, and had the folly to suppose, that it was designed to warm and cheer themselves alone, regardless of the fact, that its rays streamed far and wide into the surrounding darkness, and that multitudes of storm-tossed mariners, blessed the friendly light, that taught them where to shun, and where to seek the shore. Even while he was illustrating, in the most striking manner, the universal Paternity of God, the disciples of Moses hesitated not to deny the universal brotherhood of man, and stigma-

* Isaiah ii. 2–4.

tized as hopeless outcasts from the favour of Jehovah, these very Gentiles, for whose intellectual and moral welfare,—for whose final and complete redemption from ignorance and sin and misery, he was himself, unconsciously, employed in preparing the way. Oh, how inscrutably wise, how infinitely merciful, is He, Who thus compels us to promote each other's good, in spite of ourselves!—Who, when in our folly and wickedness, we refuse to partake of a *present*, provides for us a *future* feast of love; and when our hearts are most inclined to curse, often constrains us, to bless each other with our hands! Though he knew it not, the Jew was working for the Gentile; he was spreading a table, at which he, whom, in the first instance, he spurned as a dog, was soon to find a brother's place, a brother's welcome, and a brother's portion.

But how was this change of feeling wrought? By whom was the Jew instructed in what light the Gentile ought to be regarded by him? Who first taught the doctrine of the paternity of God, and the brotherhood of man, in all the fullness of their meaning, and in terms which could not be mistaken? We claim this honour for the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world;" by the sprinkling of whose blood, all nations were made clean; to whose cross, the handwriting of ordinances was for ever nailed; by whose death, "the middle wall of partition was broken down;" "who made of twain, the Jew and the Gentile, one new man, reconciling both unto God, in one body, by the cross;" who was "lifted up," as he himself declared, that "he might draw *all* men unto him." Yes, my

friends, it was Jesus Christ that first put the world in full possession of the glorious doctrines of God's Paternal character, and men's equal brotherhood. A few of the wisest of the heathen may have had a faint conception of them; to some of the most devout and benevolent of God's chosen people, they may, perhaps, have been still more clearly known; but it was reserved for our Lord and Master, to bring them to clearer light by his Gospel. Nor was even *he* able to effect this all at once; the strong prejudices of those whom he addressed, were to be gradually removed. During his personal ministry, while the nature of his office and kingdom was still a matter of doubt, the doctrine of God's equal and impartial love, could not have been taught with full effect. It was not, till the hope of temporal and national aggrandisement had been completely dispelled by the death of their Messiah, and hopes of a more glorious nature awakened by his resurrection, and confirmed by their participation of spiritual gifts, that his followers could enter fully into the grandeur of the Christian scheme, and regard it with satisfaction, as designed to promote the everlasting welfare of the whole human family, rather than the temporary exaltation of that particular branch of it, to which they belonged. While their selfishness had any food of hope to live upon, it grew and flourished, and, in doing so, checked the growth of every better feeling. Wisely, then, was the full revelation of what is frequently termed in Scripture, the great mystery of the Gospel, the destruction of the Jewish peculiarity, and the reception of the Gentiles into covenant with the universal Father, reserved till the very last;

till the root of selfishness had been exterminated, till affliction had wrought her perfect work, and the complete frustration of earthly hopes, had left them to seek in heavenly ones, their only consolation. We may see, then, why our Lord, during his personal ministry, chose to teach the most important of all his doctrines rather indirectly, and by implication, than explicitly; and trusted to his followers, to develope it to the world, at a somewhat later period.

But, perhaps, I shall be asked for the proof, that our Lord himself, before his death, did take this comprehensive view of the religion that he preached, and contemplated the arrival of a time, when all mankind should say, "Our Father," and understand, and feel, that their equal brotherhood was implied in the expression. I answer, that though Jesus Christ wisely confined his personal mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and forbore to intimate to them, his ulterior views for the rest of the human race, with a plainness and precipitation that would have defeated his own ends, by awakening every selfish propensity and hostile prejudice, before reason was strong enough to combat with them;—nevertheless, he said many things, calculated to prepare the way for the gradual development of the most liberal views,—many which may prove to us, that his plan was, to the full, as extensively philanthropic in its original conception, as we hope and pray that it will prove, in its final result. The fundamental principles of that religion which Christ preached, were such as a universal religion might be expected to inculcate, —a love of God with all the heart, and soul, and

mind, and strength, and an all-embracing love of man, bounded by no imaginable distinctions; including enemies as well as friends; those who love, and those who love us not; every individual, by what name soever called, Gentile, Samaritan, or Jew, with whom we can sympathize, either in sorrow or in joy. Beyond a doubt, Christianity is based upon principles which fit it, (and we may well suppose, therefore, were designed to do so, by its great Author) for universal diffusion. But we have direct proofs, that he himself anticipated this result. The comparison of his kingdom to a grain of mustard-seed, which, when it is grown up, becomes a great tree, in the branches whereof the birds build their nests; to a little leaven, diffusing its influence through the whole lump; to a net cast into the sea, and gathering fishes of every kind; to a field, representing the world, with a harvest ripening on it which the angels shall reap in the last day;—all indicate his belief in the future diffusion of his religion, far beyond the narrow limits of Judea. Thus also we find him prophesying, that the acts of a particular individual should be spoken of, wherever his Gospel should be preached, in *the whole world,* alluding to the case of the Gentiles, in terms, the meaning of which, however dark at the time, cannot now be mistaken:—"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; *them* also I must bring; and *they* shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd;" and, finally, speaking of a day, when *all nations* shall be gathered before his judgment-seat, and he shall "separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Who can doubt, that when our Lord made

use of such language as this, he anticipated the triumph of his Gospel over all opposition, and the enfolding of all nations in its friendly embrace?

Nor was he ignorant, that this most desirable and glorious result, would involve the destruction of the Jewish peculiarity. "Woman, believe me," said he, to the woman of Samaria (at an early period of his ministry), "the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." Thus, also, after having related the Parable of the Vineyard, let out by its possessor to husbandmen, who would not impart to him of its fruits, but persecuted his servants, and cast out and slew his son and heir, and thus drew down destruction on their own heads,—our Lord, to leave no doubt of its application, thus addressed the chief priests and elders of the people who surrounded him: "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, that the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." To the same effect, and almost as explicitly, we find him expressing himself in the Parable of the great Supper; from which all those who were first bidden, but on various pretences refused to come, were excluded; while the streets and lanes of the city, and the highways and hedges of all the district round, were searched for guests who had never before sat down to such a banquet, that the

house of the munificent entertainer might be filled. It is evident, then, that the reception of the Gentiles into covenant with God, and the substitution of a simple and spiritual religion, for the burdensome ceremonial of Moses, was included in our Lord's original plan, though the free development of his views on this head, was wisely deferred, till the earthly ambition of his followers was extinguished by his death, and their immortal hopes awakened by his resurrection. How clearly may the hand of God be seen, in His successive dispensations! Abraham and the Patriarchs prepared the way for Moses and the Prophets; the law was a schoolmaster, to bring men to Christ; and we, my brethren,—blessed be God!—live in those latter days, of which Christ spoke, when neither in a mountain of Samaria, nor yet at Jerusalem, nor at any other place exclusively, but everywhere, and always, we may worship that God, Who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth; calling upon Him as our Father,—the impartial and loving Father,—by whom no child that He has made, ever has been, or ever will be, injured, neglected, or forgotten. Thanks be to God, for this unspeakable gift! For ever praised be His name, for this revelation of His love by Jesus Christ! Amen.

XIII.

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.

LUKE XI. 2.

"OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN."

GOD is our Father. We derive our being from Him; it is preserved by His providential care, and retained only during His good pleasure. He unites in Himself, in the highest perfection, the essential attributes of the paternal character,—authority to command, wisdom to guide, and goodness to bless. No being can resist His power; He knows perfectly what we are, what we ought to be, and by what process of corrective and improving discipline, we may be trained to the highest degree of excellence, of which our nature is capable; and, finally, His love for us, but dimly shadowed forth by that of earthly parents for their offspring, is such as to prompt Him, to confer upon us every blessing that infinite power, under the guidance of infinite wisdom, can confer.

On these views of the Divine character, I have already enlarged. We have seen why we should say, "Our Father," when we pray; but wherefore is it

added, "Who art in Heaven"? Did our Saviour mean to convey the idea, that there is any place where God is not? Did he intend to represent Him as a local Deity, residing at a distance, more or less remote from the world which He governs; actually present, like earthly monarchs, only in some grand metropolis of His empire, but, elsewhere, contenting Himself with a mere virtual presence, and ruling, not in person, but by His representatives? Assuredly, our Saviour had no such narrow and circumscribed notion, of the Great God and Father of all. He came, not to contract, but to enlarge, the views of his countrymen; and even they, had he preached any such doctrine, could have taught him far better things. Many sublime passages could they have produced, from their sacred writings, to prove that God is everywhere, and that space itself, is not more incapable of boundary or limit, than He. "It is God," might they have said, in the language of Job, "Who shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; Who commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars; Who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; Who maketh Arcturus, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south; who doeth great things past finding out, and wonders without number. Lo! He goeth by me, and I see Him not; He passeth on also, but I perceive Him not."* "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand,

* Job. ix. 6–11.

that I cannot see Him. But He knoweth the way that I take."* "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit," they might have asked, in the words of the Psalmist, "or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in Hades, behold, Thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."† "Will God indeed dwell on the earth?" they might have said, with the Wise Man, "behold, the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain Thee,—how much less a house that man hath builded!"‡ They might have quoted Isaiah, describing Jehovah as that God "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out Heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance;" "Who taketh up the isles as a very little thing;" "Who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; Who stretcheth out the Heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in."§ "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill Heaven and earth? saith the Lord."‖

If, then, the God of the ancient patriarchs and prophets, was no limited local Deity, in their apprehension, much less could Jesus have regarded the Universal

* Job xxiii. 8–10. † Psalm c xxxix. 7–10. ‡ 1 Kings viii. 27.
§ Isaiah xl. 12, 15, 22 ‖ Jeremiah xxiii. 23, 24.

Father, in any such light. "The hour cometh," said he to the woman of Samaria, "when ye shall neither on this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father, but when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The doctrine of God's omnipresence, is not indeed taught directly in this passage, but it is obviously implied. The sacredness of places, we are here instructed, was to be done away. Jerusalem was no longer to be regarded, as holy above other cities, or Gerizim to be preferred, to any other mountain;—and why? Evidently, because all places are equally sanctified by the presence of Him Who fills all space; in Whom all creatures live and move and have their being; Who is never far from any one of us; but penetrates and searches every heart, knowing perfectly, at each successive moment, every thought and feeling of our breasts. The mind of God pervades all other minds; all finite spirits exist in the Infinite Spirit, Who has an intuitive and unerring discernment of their sympathy, or want of sympathy, with Himself.

Such was the faith of Jesus Christ; and we cannot therefore, suppose, that when he instructs us to call upon God as our Father in heaven, he means to intimate that the Most High has any favourite or peculiar place of residence, or that there is any spot in the boundless Universe, from which He is ever absent. "Do I not fill Heaven and earth? saith Jehovah," is, if possible, even more clearly the doctrine of the New, than it was of the Old Dispensation.

What ideas, then, are we to attach to the phrase, "Who art in heaven"? In the first place, it is probably intended to solemnize our spirits, by reminding us of the supreme glory and majesty of God, of His exaltation, in power, wisdom, and goodness, above all the creatures of His hand. By the epithet in question, our heavenly, is brought into contrast with our earthly parent; and the infinite and eternal greatness of the One, is rendered more striking by comparison with the frailty, feebleness, and mortality of the other. "If we have had fathers of our flesh, and gave them reverence, shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of our spirits, and live?"* What *are* the earthly authors of our being, or what *were* they (for with many of us, perchance, they are no more), but the creatures of a day,—weak, erring, dying creatures,—whom, how much soever we may respect and love them, we cannot long keep with us. "Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?"† "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more."‡ Is there not comfort, then, my friends, in the thought that we have a Father, Who cannot be taken from us; Whose arm of power cannot be shortened; Whose thoughts of love cannot be restrained; and Who, though every earthly protector and friend should perish, and pass away, will still remain, to guide, support, and bless us? Have we not reason to be grateful, that we can say, with the Psalmist, "When my father and my mo-

* Hebrews xii. 9. † Zechariah i. 5. ‡ Psalm ciii. 15–16.

ther forsake me, the Lord will take me up" ?* and will not the expression referred to, answer a good purpose, if it lead us to meditate seriously, on the infinite superiority of our Heavenly Father, to the object of our warmest gratitude, deepest reverence, and tenderest affection, here below? In almost every language, mental and moral excellence and superiority, (these very words, by the way, furnish an example,) are denoted by terms originally conveying the idea of physical height; thus, we speak of a sublime, an exalted, an elevated character; of high principles, and lofty ambition; while base, low, grovelling, are the epithets which we apply to the opposite defects. This is easily accounted for. In the moral, as in the mental world, eminence of station enlarges the sphere of vision, gives a wide command of the field of action, and enables him, who has possession of the vantage-ground, to descend with greater force and rapidity of movement, on opposing bodies placed beneath. It was natural, that in the world of mind, as in that of matter, those should be denominated the highest spots, from which the most extensive prospect was enjoyed, and the active powers put forth with the greatest efficacy. Hence it is, that we naturally speak of God, the infinite Source of all power and wisdom, as the Most High; as our Father in Heaven; as He Who dwelleth in light inaccessible. Not that we deem Him absent from any, even the lowest part of the creation, but that we regard Him, even while in it, as exalted infinitely above it, as separated, by an immeasurable distance, from the noblest creature He has formed.

* Psalm xxvii. 10.

True it is, that not a "sparrow falleth to the ground without Him;" that not an insect wings its flight through the air,—that not a reptile crawls upon the surface of the earth, unsustained by His all-pervading energy,—unblessed by that love, which fails not, in a single instance, to make every creature happy, according to its capacity for happiness. This is true. No creature, how insignificant soever, is so miserable as to be without God in the world. It is not, however, less true, that the highest orders of created beings, are infinitely beneath their Creator, and have reason to say, "What are we, that Thou shouldst be mindful of us, or that Thou shouldst visit us with Thy love? What are we, that Thou shouldst 'bow Thine Heaven, and come down,' to manifest Thy presence in the midst of us?" "As the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are Thy ways higher than our ways, and Thy thoughts than our thoughts." "God is in Heaven, and man upon earth." Let deep reverence, therefore, chasten and solemnize our love for Him; let our thoughts of Him be full of awe; and the prayers with which we approach His throne, be rendered as worthy of His gracious acceptance, as mature depth of reflection, and earnest sincerity of heart, can make them. "Keep thy foot," says the Wise Man, "when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in Heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore, let thy words be few."*

* Ecclesiastes v. 1, 2.

When we address God, then, as our Father Who is in Heaven, we are to conceive of Him, not as living in some higher region, remote from this world over which He rules; but as superior to it, even at the very moment that He pervades every part of it,—as infinitely exalted above all the creatures that He forms, sustains, and animates;—as higher than the highest of those, who live, and move, and have their being in Him;—as passing, like space itself, which is, in truth, but another name for the place of God, infinitely beyond all the Beings, whether material or spiritual, that He contains and penetrates. "Our Father, Who art in Heaven;"—our Father, that is, Whom this world, or system of worlds, cannot contain within its narrow limits; Who, though we should pass onward through eternal ages, wouldst be beyond us, and above us still; Who canst create no being equal to Thyself, none whose excellence can be less than infinitely inferior to Thine own.

But, secondly, we may, I think, regard our text as further implying, that there are created minds, to whom the great Father of all, makes brighter revelations of His glory, than He has ever yet done to us; that there is, at least some part, perhaps many parts, of the Universe, where minds of a higher order dwell, who live in closer sympathy with the Divine Mind, and enjoy, therefore, more abundant and more glorious manifestations, of His power, wisdom, and love. That this is the case, is distinctly intimated, in the subsequent petition, that God's will may be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven; or, in other words, that the spirits of living men, may be gradually assimilated, by the growth of

knowledge, and the discipline of piety and virtue, to spirits already glorified, existing in some other part of God's Universe, who yield to God a purer and more perfect service, and partake, therefore, more largely of those joys, which He reserves, in the largest abundance, for those who love and serve Him best.

As for the question, where Heaven is, I think it sufficient to answer, that it is wherever true and holy spirits are; wherever perfect sympathy with God is enjoyed; wherever the cheering presence of our Heavenly Father is inly felt,—putting pain and sorrow and care to flight,—diffusing a serene joy over the soul, a peace of God that passeth all understanding, which the world can neither give nor take away. Even while our Lord Jesus Christ was still in this world, he described himself as the "Son of Man who is in Heaven." And so indeed he was, for he enjoyed that intimate, that perfect union with the Father, which constitutes heavenly bliss, and the possession of which, would be, in itself, sufficient to convert the darkest spot of God's creation into a paradise of light and joy. "The mind," says Milton, "is its own place." "He that has light within his own clear breast, may sit in the centre, and enjoy bright day. But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts, benighted walks under the mid-day sun; himself is his own dungeon." By the Kingdom of Heaven, I understand the kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit;—the kingdom,—wherever it may be situated, it matters not where,—and whenever it may arrive, let us labour and pray that it may come speedily,—in which glory to God in the

highest, and peace and goodwill to all the children of God, shall universally prevail, in which sin, and, therefore, pain and sorrow and death, shall be known no more. The state of the sincerely pious and good man here below, is almost a heaven, compared with that of the wilful and impenitent sinner; and if he himself looks forward, with earnest prayers and ardent longings to a still higher state, it is because he feels the weight of remaining imperfections, of sins and frailties which still beset him, interposing a veil of separation between him and his God, and preventing that full and undisturbed communion with Him, in which perfect happiness consists. "If a man love me," said Jesus, "he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him."

Happy would it be for us, my friends, if our minds were always in a fit state to receive and entertain these Heavenly guests: then, indeed, little would remain for us to desire; our Heaven would have commenced on earth. But alas! how far is this from being the case even with the best of us; how often do the things of this world, its absorbing interests, its distracting cares, its seducing pleasures, intrude-upon and engross our thoughts and affections, lead us into wilful transgressions of the Divine law, and thus render us, at once unworthy and incapable of those gracious visitations from above, those sweet foretastes of Heaven's bliss, with which we should otherwise be favoured. Is there not joy, then, in the thought, that it will not always be so, that there are, even now, in existence,

myriads of happy spirits, purified, it may be, by discipline similar to that which we are now undergoing, wholly delivered from the wretched slavery of sin, and sharing the indescribable bliss of an intimate and continually increasing sympathy with God, and of a benevolence, that never ceases to strengthen and expand itself towards all the living creatures that God has formed? "Our Father, Who art in Heaven," Whose glories are manifested in other worlds more brightly, even than they are in this, Whom minds of a higher order know, and love, and serve, more perfectly than we have, as yet, the will or the power to do,—blessed be Thy name, that for us, also, a Heaven is reserved; that whereas we now see Thee through a glass darkly, we can look forward to a time, when, to our strengthened vision, Thy glories shall be more brightly revealed,—when the present imperfections of our knowledge, love, and service, shall be done away, and we shall be admitted into the blessed society, of those who find perfect happiness in perfect obedience to Thy holy will.

Such, then, my Christian friends, are the ideas, which seem to me to be naturally suggested, by the phrase which I have endeavoured to illustrate. It intimates, in the first place, the infinite superiority of the most High God to all the creatures He has formed, and teaches us to bow with prostrate awe before Him, Who, while He is on earth, is in Heaven also, Whom the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain; and, secondly, when viewed in connection with other passages of Scripture, it seems to imply, that there are already in existence, minds of a higher order than our own, who

are privileged to enjoy a nearer access to the Deity, and a more intimate communion with Him, while, at the same time, it carries us forward, in thought and hope, to a period, when, if we be not wanting to ourselves, but resolutely resist the temptations, and contend with the difficulties and trials by which we are surrounded, struggling upwards, with a determined will, towards the Source of light, we shall become sharers in their privileges, and partakers of their joy. Amen.

XIV.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

JOB XIV. 14.

"IF A MAN DIE, SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN?"

THERE is a well-known argument for the immortality of the soul, enforced by the classical pen of Addison, in the 111th No. of his 'Spectator,' with that chaste propriety of thought, and graceful simplicity of diction, for which he was so remarkable,—the argument, I mean, derived from the soul's capacity for endless progress. "Among other excellent arguments for the immortality of the soul," he says, "there is one, drawn from the perpetual progress of the soul towards perfection, without a possibility of ever arriving at it, which I do not remember to have seen opened and improved by others who have written upon this subject, though it seems to me to carry a great weight with it. How can it enter into the thoughts of man, that the soul, which is capable of such immense perfections, and of receiving new improvements to all eternity, should fall away to nothing, almost as soon as it is created? Are such abilities made to no purpose? A brute arrives at a point of per-

fection that he can never pass: in a few years, he has all the endowments that he is capable of; and were he to live ten thousand more, would be the same thing he is at present. Were a human soul thus at a stand in her accomplishments, were her faculties to be full blown, and incapable of further enlargements, I could imagine it might fall away insensibly, and drop at once into a state of annihilation. But can we believe that a thinking being, that is in a perpetual progress of improvements, and travelling on from perfection to perfection, after having just looked abroad into the works of its Creator, and made a few discoveries of His infinite goodness, wisdom, and power, must perish, at her first setting out, and in the very beginning of her inquiries?" "Can an infinitely wise Being," he adds, in a subsequent passage, "delight in the production of such abortive intelligences, such short-lived reasonable beings? Would He give us talents that are not to be exerted? Capabilities that are never to be gratified? How can we find that wisdom, which shines through all His works, in the formation of man, without looking on this world as only a nursery for the next, and believing that the several generations of rational creatures, which rise up and disappear, in such quick successions, are only to receive their first rudiments of existence here, and afterwards to be transplanted into a more friendly climate, where they may spread and flourish to all eternity?"

Such is the argument of Addison, for the immortality of the soul, conveyed in his own clear and emphatic language. I confess that I was surprised to find it repeated, in even stronger terms, without abatement, qua-

lification, or defence, by that eloquent writer of the present day,—Theodore Parker. In arguing for the immortality of the soul, from the various peculiarities in the nature and circumstances of man, having first adduced the universal desire of immortality,—which, he contends, implies that "the satisfaction thereof will be equally universal," he next proceeds to argue from the assumed fact, which he, as well as Addison, would appear to regard as obvious and indisputable, that, "while the composite body decays, the simple soul decays not," —that reason, the affections, all the powers that make the man, retain, through the whole period of his earthly existence, all their force and vigour; that there is no cause for thinking that love, conscience, reason, ever do, or will, become weaker in man; that there *is* cause for thinking, on the contrary, that all these become continually more strong.

Now it cannot be denied, I think, that both these writers have assumed more than they were warranted in assuming, and that they have left unnoticed, objections which lie so obviously upon the surface, that it is wonderful they should not have occurred to them, and which, if not fatal to their argument, must, at least, be allowed to be formidable, and to deserve, even if they do not imperatively call for, a reply.

And in the first place, I would remark, that both take for granted the soul's capability of perpetual progress towards perfection, of "receiving new improvements," as Addison expresses it, "to all eternity." Surely this is a large assumption; much larger than the finite experience of mortal man can warrant. Even if it were

true, that, so far as our bounded knowledge extended, the human soul never came to a pause, or period, in its progress, but went on spreading itself to the last moment of its earthly existence, as that eastern plant, to which our Lord compares His Kingdom, continues to spread itself, till it has arrived at the full period of its growth; even if it were so, it would surely be rash in the extreme, to assume without proof, (and no satisfactory proof can, I imagine, be found, save the assurance of God Himself,) that this process must go on for ever, —and the human soul not merely live, but enlarge, and diffuse itself, as it were, by fresh accessions of knowledge and virtue, to all eternity.

We *may* hope for this; we may even *believe* it, on Divine authority; but to prove it, by any process of human reasoning, seems to me absolutely impossible. We have no analogies to help us. Most earthly things seem to have their limits of progress, and to reach the point, beyond which they do not advance, within a less or greater, but still a definite, space of years. The human race, considered in its collective character, seems perhaps to be an exception; but even of this, our short-lived experience will hardly authorize us to affirm, that it will always exist on earth, as it does now, and never reach its acme. Suppose, then, we could be certain, that no human soul attains, as I am quite inclined to think that none does attain, the highest excellence of which it is capable in this world, still to infer thence, that it never will, would evidently be, to make our conclusion much larger than our premises would warrant. The idea of infinite and eternal progression, is indeed

an astounding one. Faith may enable us to realize it, but I question whether reason could.

But this is not all :—these writers have left wholly unnoticed, the obvious objection to their argument, presented by the phenomena of old age,—by the undoubted fact, with which I should have thought that every man's experience must have made him familiar, that the human mind seems to grow old with the body, though not always as soon, or as rapidly, as the body does ;—that, at an earlier or later period, the process of decay, which reduces its frail partner to dust, appears to commence in it ;—and that extreme old age, is seldom, if ever, unattended by a visible decline, or obscuration, of the mental faculties. "The ideas," says Locke, in one of the very few eloquent passages, that are to be found in the writings of that profound and clear thinker and reasoner, "like the children of our youth, die before us, and our minds resemble those tombs to which we are approaching, where, though the brass and the marble may remain, the inscriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery moulders away." Who can fail to have observed that, after a certain period of life has arrived, varying however considerably in different individuals, the senses become less acute, the memory less retentive, the imagination less lively ; that new ideas are less easy to be acquired, and old prejudices more difficult to be shaken off; that, from the store of recently obtained knowledge, one portion after another drops away, and that the mind is obliged to fall back, for food and refreshment, on its earlier accumulations, on those ideas, which, having been sooner impressed, and more fre-

quently reviewed, cannot so easily be forgotten? Who expects the aged man to produce works worthy of his more vigorous days? Who can be surprised to find the Odyssey,—assuming it to have been indeed, as the critic Longinus has supposed, a later production of the same bard,—less vigorous and brilliant than the Iliad? or who can fail to sympathize in the reverential feeling, that has led the critic referred to, to compare the epic of the aged, as contrasted with that of the youthful Homer, to "the sun in its evening declination, that abates its splendour, but retains its magnitude, and pleases more, though it dazzles less"?

Old age, though it has its solemn and beautiful aspects, is doubtless a period of diminished activity and power. "At length," says Dr. Johnson, speaking of the period of its approach, "weariness succeeds to novelty, and the mind lies at ease in the contemplation of her own attainments, without any desire of new conquests or excursions. This is the age of recollection and narrative; the opinions are settled, and the avenues of apprehension shut against any new intelligence; the days that are to follow, must pass in the inculcation of precepts already collected, and the tenets already received. Nothing is henceforward so odious as opposition, so insolent as doubt, or so dangerous as novelty."

It cannot, I think, be denied, that these well-known phenomena of age, present an objection, of some force, to the argument of Addison. I am not disposed to admit, however, that it has all the weight that Mr. Belsham and others would ascribe to it. Examples not unfrequently present themselves, of men's retaining their

mental faculties, in full vigour and unclouded brightness, to a very advanced period of life ; and where health has been preserved, unimpaired by the attacks of casual disease, or by habits of intemperate self-indulgence, instances are *numerous*, of persons who have pursued the career of intellectual improvement, far into the evening of their allotted day, and who, till what may be justly termed a late hour, have experienced no perceptible decline of their power or their activity. Nor can there be the slightest doubt, that, were the moral habits of our race what they ought to be, were the appetites temperately indulged, the passions duly restrained, and the feelings and the temper regulated as virtue prescribes, such instances would constitute, not, as they now do, the occasional exceptions, but the general rule.

The *disease* of old age, for as such, we may reasonably regard it, need not, if we were wise, come upon us till a much later period than it is wont to do. It would then, in all probability, perform its work of dissolution, and divorce between the body and the spirit, easily and rapidly, and without producing any injurious effect upon the latter. But, by our vices and follies, we hasten its approach and aggravate its symptoms, and substitute an early, long, and lingering, for a late, speedy, and easy death. That the mind and the body necessarily keep pace in their rise and fall, as far as my experience goes, is anything rather than a true statement. The fault, on the contrary, I am disposed to think, is almost always our own, if, long after the latter has culminated and begun to decline, the former does not continue to climb upwards to its far sublimer meridian.

And let me not forget to remark, that the noblest part of man, I mean his moral nature, is the last to suffer from the decays of age. The virtues remain in their vigour, nay, I may say perpetuate their growth, after the process of intellectual development seems to have been arrested, or even that of decay to have actually commenced. Integrity, truth, benevolence, when do their manifestations disappear in the good old man? When does he cease to frown indignant at a dishonourable action? When is he known to pollute his lips with a falsehood? When does he fail to welcome those who are dear to him, with looks of love? In the human heart, as in the world, only let the Kingdom of Christ once be established, and though prophecies may fail, and tongues may cease, and knowledge may vanish away, yet love will never fail, it abideth for ever. When the appeal has been made to the sympathies of virtue within him,—who has not seen in the aged man's kindling eye, and quivering lip, and rising colour, the outward proofs of the warm feelings, that are still glowing in his heart? even as the tree that has been cut down,—"though the root thereof have waxed old in the earth, and the stock thereof seemed to die in the ground,—yet, through the scent of water, it will bud and bring forth boughs like a young plant."

On this subject Dr. Crombie, in his essay on a Future State, has dilated with great force and beauty. "Our mental energies," says he, "it is confessed, are very generally impaired as the body decays, but our moral susceptibilities and powers suffer no declension by age; but, on the contrary, continue in full vigour, to the close

of a lengthened existence."—"Age may blunt our perceptions, impair our memory, subdue the imagination, and weaken the understanding, but it opposes no bar to our improvement in virtue. To the pious and benevolent affections of our nature, which are the brightest ornaments of human character, and permanent sources of the purest gratification, the decay of our corporeal frame prescribes no limit. We find the love of the husband, the affection of the parent, the sympathy of the friend, gratitude to benefactors, placability to enemies, and charity towards all men, displaying themselves in the extremity of age, as powerfully as in earlier years."

That this is frequently the case, cannot, I think, be disputed; but the assertion is too general, and general assertions almost always need qualification, if we would have them pass for what they are worth. The moral man, experience may fully warrant us in affirming, is, for the most part, the last to suffer from the disease of old age, and not unfrequently survives in full vigour long after the traces of decay in the intellectual man have become distinctly visible; but that virtue, as well as intellect, does not sometimes suffer from this last wasting disease, it would be rash, and indeed foolish to assert, inasmuch as it is obvious that to the existence of virtue itself, a certain portion of intellect is absolutely necessary. Some, doubtless, if not many who hear me,—and with sadness and sorrow of heart, I well know, that such recollections will be revived,—can call to mind particular instances, in which the lava-flood of the last disease, seems to have buried beneath it almost all that was lovely, as well as all that was great and powerful, in the characters of those who are most dear to them.

Even where this *has* been the case, however, my persuasion is, that the immortal mind has been cast down indeed, and overwhelmed, but not destroyed; and that death, in all probability, will prove to have been the happy termination of that disease, the passing away of that fever, (whether in a joyful waking, or a sweet healthful slumber previous to that waking, I pretend not now to determine,) of which the effects have seemed to us so melancholy and so fatal. The education of life, my strong hope is, will prove not to have been in vain. The inscriptions made upon our minds, in the course of the various discipline of this world, by the pen of the great Instructor, though apparently filled up by time, and the accretion of earthly particles above them, will prove not to have been effaced. The powerful hand of Death will clear the tablet, and the writing will come forth once more distinct and beautiful, as when we read it in former days,—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and goodwill to man." On the whole, notwithstanding the objection presented by the phenomena of old age, I am disposed to lay considerable stress on the argument of Addison, and to contend that the capacity which the human mind possesses for progressive improvement, up to a very late, if not the latest period of its earthly sojourn, is a strong presumption that its existence is not to terminate here, but to be continued, in still more favourable circumstances, beyond the grave.

Moreover, the case of old age, or of what is called natural and gradual decline, even supposing that it always answered to this description, which I have already

observed that it does not, is in truth comparatively a rare one. By far the larger part of the species, are in fact, removed, by the diseases or calamitous accidents of this life, long before they have attained their maturity; multitudes perishing, like flowers in the bud, before their inward faculties have been, in any perceptible degree, developed; multitudes, again, falling like flowers in their early bloom, just as the process of development is beginning to make visible and rapid progress; not a few, stricken down, like young trees of the forest, with stems well grown, though they have not yet put forth many branches, in the full vigour of their youthful days; and many, finally, like large and massive trunks, which, though they spread their leafy branches far and wide, still give promise of future years of growth and expansion,—uprooted before their time in the pride of manly strength. It has been calculated that a full half of the human race die before they have reached the twentieth year. Suppose a calculation far more favourable,—substitute the thirtieth for the twentieth, yet who, even upon this supposition, can fail to regard this cutting short of the promise and the hope of man, as one of the most mysterious and inscrutable of God's decrees? Who, that believes in the power, wisdom, and love of the Invisible One, and possesses the faculty of looking forward into the future, can fail to discover in it, the germ, at least, of the hope of a future life?

Look upon the lovely countenance of many an infant; —its speaking eyes, its smiling mouth, its expanded forehead, its frame instinct with motion, its whole being full of promise;—you love it, and does not God

also love it? But wait a few moments, and the scene changes. The child hangs a drooping head; the eye loses its brightness; the smile is seen upon the lips no more; the cold damps of death gather upon the forehead; it lies motionless in the mother's arms, or on her knees, for a few hours, and then it dies. She would have saved it, if she could, but she could not. And has God then forgotten it? Is His arm, too, shortened, that He cannot save? Has He ceased to love it, and taken back from it His good gift of life? Oh! surely not. Surely it is far more probable, that the living spirit has returned to Him who gave it; that, though we see it not, "it is," still, "well with the child;" that it lives to drink of the cup of joy, of which it had been graciously permitted to taste, and to fulfil the hopes, which it had been allowed to kindle in so many loving hearts.

And if this hope is reasonable, in the case of a being in whom self-consciousness was scarcely awakened, and whose continued existence was far more the object of desire to others, than it possibly could be to itself, how much more strongly must we feel disposed to cherish it, for those whose mental faculties and powers have been more fully developed, to whom their own thoughtful experience of life has made it precious, and whose souls have been linked, by innumerable ties of gratitude and love, to the souls of those around them. Had those whom we are called to part with, reached their highest point, did we see them taken from us, only in their decline, we might, perhaps, reconcile ourselves to the thought, of the mournful process of decay being has-

tened, and the sad catastrophe brought on, somewhat more rapidly than it might have been; but to think of those we love, thrust out of existence in the early morning, or even in the bright meridian of their day,—destined to perish utterly; the large promise of knowledge, virtue, and happiness, which they gave, almost wholly unfulfilled;—condemned to death, before they had made anything like a fair trial of life;—forced to say farewell for ever, while the flame of love was glowing, with unabated purity and fervour, in their breasts;—torn from all that was dear to them, in a moment, as the boisterous wind tears the leaf, still green and full of sap, from the tree;—how is it possible to witness such a spectacle, and to refrain from asking Addison's question, "Can an infinitely wise and good Being delight in the production of such abortive intelligences, such short-lived reasonable beings? Would he give us talents that are not to be exerted, capabilities that are never to be gratified?"

I cannot but think that there are many probabilities against it. Not only are multitudes removed by death, as I have already observed, in infancy, childhood, youth, and vigorous manhood, with faculties either wholly or partially undeveloped, but we often find that those of the greatest power and promise,—both intellectually and morally, the wisest, the purest, and the best,—are taken first. So common is this, that it has almost passed into a proverb; and, not unfrequently, have we heard it remarked, of the child or the youth, on whom the smile of approving Heaven would seem peculiarly to rest, that "he was too good to live." And can we believe,

—is it rational, is it possible to suppose,—that these favoured children of God, are given up by Him, of His own free-will, an early prey to death—to death eternal?

No longer, then, let us ask, "O Death, where is thy victory?" for God Himself, in that case, is Death, and, as the Oriental poet says of Him, selects from amongst the gems of earth, the very brightest jewels to swell His store. How much more honourable to God, how much more consolatory to man, how much more credible in itself—so, at least, it seems to me—is that solution of the difficulty, which we find in the beautiful language of a Jewish apocryphal writer! "Though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. For honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was beloved of Him: so that, living amongst sinners, he was translated, yea, speedily was taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time. For his soul pleased the Lord, therefore hasted He to take him away from amongst the wicked." Even if there were no Revelation, I see not how such dispensations,—and they are by no means uncommon—happy those of us who in their own social circle have not witnessed some of them!—can be explained in any other manner. The good God—the Father—annihilating his best children, in the very bud or bloom of their existence! rewarding them, for their love to Himself and to His offspring,

with "everlasting destruction from His presence, and from the glory of His power!" Is it not easier far, to believe in a future life than in this?

Especially does it seem necessary to resort to this solution, when we see the virtuous, in many instances, falling early victims to their own virtue,—offering themselves, for the good of man, on the altar of their God, a willing sacrifice. Think of those, who, in ancient and in modern times, have poured out their young blood, in the cause of what they have deemed truth and virtue, and human welfare and happiness.

Recall to your recollection those primitive confessors, of what they at least deemed a true and purifying faith, who "had trials of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments, who were stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, who were destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy." Picture to yourselves a Stephen, with a face, "as it were, of an angel," breathing out his spirit, in supplication for those who were persecuting him to death. Look upon that holier Victim still, that most illustrious of sufferers, with those arms which he had so often lifted up in prayer for sinful men, and with which he would fain, if he could, have circled the whole world in one embrace of love, nailed to the Cross, and, after little more than a life of thirty years, spent in doing good, laying down that life, in its pure and holy prime, for his brethren; and say, whether it is possible to believe, that these holy martyrs and confessors, this Stephen, this Jesus, died, to live no more; that God permitted them to lay down their life, (what would not

a man give in exchange for his life?) before its natural term had expired, for His sake and their brethren's, knowing that He had nothing to offer them, and meant to offer them nothing in return! What! will any one tell me, that the voice of conscience, which is the voice of God within me, says, "die for the truth, die for the love of God and of the brethren," and yet that the voice of Reason, which is no less the voice of God, warns me, at the same time, that that death must be eternal? To me it seems no weak proof of an hereafter, that the nature which God has given me compels me to admire, and that conscience prompts me to imitate, those who, in obedience to her dictates, sacrifice *all*—life itself not excepted—that they possess here.

The premature death, then, of the young and the vigorous, the premature death more especially of those who give the brightest promise of intellect and virtue, and, above all, the premature death of those who die willingly for truth and virtue's sake, are, to me, proofs of a future life not to be resisted,—proofs in which I should rest, in no small degree of confidence, even if I were compelled, by some fatality, which God avert, to relinquish that same hope, that joyful certainty, which He has given me in His own beloved Son.

Closely connected with the foregoing argument, is one on which an able writer, to whom I have more than once referred, insists, with no small degree of force and eloquence, namely, that in numberless instances, the development of the intellectual and moral powers is prevented or obstructed, in this world, by circumstances, implying no want of virtue or voluntary

effort in the individual, and which he has no power whatever to control. How many are there, in every rank of life, whom a little alteration of their position in the social scale, or of the influences to which they have been exposed, would have elevated in character, far above the highest point to which, with their utmost efforts, they have been able to attain; who have wanted, not so much the power and the will, as the means and the opportunity, to be great and good; who have rested in mediocrity or sunk beneath it, not from any impotence or indisposition to rise, but solely for the want of those early incentives, or subsequent aids and appliances, under the stimulus and by the use of which, men, greatly their inferiors in power, energy, and even virtue, have attained to high and distinguished excellence.

In the lower ranks of life, for instance, how many Newtons, Miltons, Lockes, not to mention hosts of smaller yet still illustrious names, have been lost to the world, merely from the want of early intellectual culture! and, what is still more deeply to be regretted, how many moral heroes, Penns, Howards, Clarksons, have never risen up to purify and bless their fellow-men, solely because the light of precept and example shone not upon their childhood and their youth, to communicate that impulse, and give that direction in the upward and onward path of truth and righteousness, of which alone they stood in need! The germs of all that was great and good were in them, but remained unfolded, from causes which they could not obviate. They might have been wise themselves, and have made others wise;

> "But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
> Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
> Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
> And froze the genial current of their soul."

They might have been greatly good, and led others on the path that leads to brighter worlds, but, alas! of those brighter worlds the voice of parental instruction spake not sweetly to them; those, who should have been their best friends, proved their worst foes. Their youthful feet were led along paths, which youthful feet should never tread; without any fault of theirs, they walked, while they were yet children, in the counsel of the ungodly, stood in the way of sinners, sat in the seat of the scornful; but the good seed was in them notwithstanding, and the principle of life, that was in the seed, would not permit it to perish. At length it struggled into light; nobly they came forth from their house of bondage, baptized with the baptism of tears; their virtue began to manifest itself in those around them, but the season was late, and there was not time for its development. And will it never be developed? Believe it not. Such men, had they entered life under happier auspices, would have been the greatest of the great—amongst the best of the good. And shall they never take their proper rank in the moral creation of God? Shall they never be known for what they were? Those may think so who deny an hereafter, but I cannot!

"They who were oppressed and trampled on," says Parker, "kept down, dwarfed, stunted, and emaciate in soul, must have justice done them there, and will doubtless stand higher in heaven, than we, who having

many talents, used them poorly, or hid them idle in the dirt, knowing our Father's will, but heeding not." "I take some miserable child," he says, "squalid in dress and look, ignorant and wicked, as most men judge of vagrant vice, made so by circumstances over which that child had no control. I turn off, with a shudder, at the public wrong that we have done, and still are doing; but in that child I see proof of another world; yes, heaven glittering from behind those saddened eyes. I know that child has a man's nature in him, perhaps a Channing's piety, perhaps a Newton's mind,—has surely rudiments of more than these; for what were Channing and Newton, both of them, but embryo men? I turn off, with a shudder, at the public wrong, but with a faith in God's justice, in that child's eternal life, which nothing can ever shake."

Yes, my friends, Parker is right. We have only to visit a ragged school, or to take a morning or evening stroll, in some of the narrow lanes and alleys of our metropolis, for abundant proofs of an hereafter. Amongst those who have been trained in the very lowest haunts of vice, yea, and who, owing to the acuteness of a naturally powerful though misdirected intellect, have unhappily done but too much justice to their training, we shall still find some, it may be not a few, in whose deeds, words, looks, gleams are continually bursting forth, of that heaven of which they were born free heirs, and from which, as yet, we would fain hope, they cannot have wandered far. Many of them, we trust, thanks to their own efforts, the thrice-blessed labours of benevolence on their behalf, and the help of Him

Who is mighty to save, will live to prove the divinity of their nature and their origin, to shake off what is earthly and sensual in them, and to stand forth men, redeemed and disenthralled from that slavery of sin, into which they were sold, poor innocents! (oh, shame to those who sold them) at their very birth! But some, perhaps many of them, will die before that time arrives; before they can either free themselves or be freed; and what will become of them? Will they be worse off in God's hands than in ours? Will He suffer them to breathe their last—their very last—in that bitter bondage? Will He, like their earthly parents, have no pity on them? Rest assured, though no one here should pity them, God will pity them. If He takes them hence, it will be to Himself. He will cause death, as it has been beautifully expressed, to be "their birth-angel."

There cannot be a doubt that circumstances, over which the individual has no control, often prove as fatally obstructive to the development of what is good within him, as death itself. The savage has not power, if he would, to place himself on a level with the civilized man. The worshipper of Brahma, or the disciple of Mohammed, cannot fairly be expected to attain to an equality with the well-instructed Christian. Christians themselves, as their education has been early or late commenced, wisely or erroneously conducted, supposing their natural powers equal, must rise above, or fall below, each other; and yet, in each one of these cases, the virtue of him who stands lowest in the scale, if measured, as it surely ought to be, by his standard of excellence and power of

conforming to it, may be fully equal, or even greatly superior, to that of the more fortunate brother who stands above him. He may have made far better use of his one talent, than that brother, of his five. And yet, within his breast, God permits powers and faculties to lie folded up and dormant, which, in the other's, grow and flourish, and bring forth fruit abundantly. Shall it be always so? Shall the time never arrive when he, who is in truth the better man, shall be seen in his true light, and develope the good that is in him?

If this be our only life, it must be so in innumerable instances. In the garden of this world, the inferior flowers often flourish, while the very finest,—planted, it may be, in a soil, or in an aspect, less favourable for them,—scarcely open their buds at all. Is it not clear, that the wise gardener, to whose searching eye all their possible beauties stand revealed, though for his own reasons he has consigned them for a season to the spot they occupy, has marked them for future transplantation? The argument is of very wide, if not universal, application. There is much good in every human being, that only waits to be developed. To none, not even the best of our race, is the education of circumstances altogether favourable. Even he, of whom we read that "he was made perfect through suffering," has taught us, that in its application to human beings, that strong word "perfect" must always be understood in a limited sense, for that "none is good save one, that is God."

To all of us, my belief is, death will prove the birth-angel, commencing, where it is not already commenced, the process of purification, even for the wicked, and

carrying forward that of refinement and exaltation for the good. In conclusion, I would remark, that this argument for a future life, from the imperfection of human development on earth, and the numerous apparent irregularities of the phenomena attending it,—irregularities, which, like those of the movements of the heavenly bodies, it evidently requires a much wider extent of space, and a much larger cycle of time, than our eye can take in or our brief existence measure, to harmonize,—seems to me in the highest degree satisfactory and convincing. May God give His blessing, and enable each one of us, so to improve the discipline of this life, as to enter, in the best state of preparation, into the yet more effectual discipline of that which is to come. Amen.

XV.

PEACE WITHOUT AND WITHIN.

JOHN XIV. 27.

"PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU: NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I UNTO YOU. LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED, NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID."

PEACE denotes the absence of all agitating and disturbing influences, the harmonious action and reaction upon each other, of the several parts of any complex system. The mind is at peace within itself, when all its faculties, feelings, and affections, act smoothly and aright, offering no obstruction or impediment to each other's movements, but, on the contrary, imparting and receiving mutual assistance; like the planets in their courses, pursuing, all of them, at due distance, their separate paths, yet each putting forth attractive influences, which help to guide and regulate the rest. Peace, in this sense, is the inward calm, not of the torpid and indolent, but of the wakeful and active mind: the stillness, which proves, not that the wonderful machine has ceased to move, but that all its parts are in full and unimpeded action, performing their several offices, while they preserve their mutual relations.

The greatest works of God are thus wrought in

silence. "There is no speech, no language—no voice is heard." With noiseless rapidity the heavenly bodies, guided by a hand unseen, roll on through the depths of space. The music of the spheres is audible to the mental ear alone; God fills the universe, and acts upon it silently. With Him there is peace always, but inaction never. "My Father worketh hitherto," said Jesus, "and I work." From His work of love and mercy, God has no sabbath, nor *can* have, till He ceases to be infinitely good. So likewise it is, if we may without blame compare small things to great, with the virtuous mind: the peace, which pervades it, is not the peace of inactivity, but that which arises from natural, healthful, undisturbed, and well-regulated action. When our understandings and affections, our desires and our duties, harmonize; when we go on our way rejoicing, along the path which an enlightened conscience teaches us that we ought to pursue, then it is that we feel true peace of mind. "Rejoice in the Lord alway," says the Apostle, "and again I say, rejoice. Let your mild and benignant spirit be known unto all men. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." Be pious and benevolent. Pursue the path of rectitude; and trust in God, with a cheerful and implicit confidence, to bring it to a happy issue, and you shall have peace within,—a peace which cannot be described, but which, to be comprehended, must be felt.

Second only in value to peace with ourselves, is peace with those around us,—those whom God hath made of one blood, to dwell with us on the face of the earth,—our brethren of mankind. We are at peace with them, when no malignant or unfriendly feeling separates us from them; when we regard and treat them as members of the same social system; when we are fully prepared, should any occasion offer, to benefit and bless them; to increase their happiness or alleviate their misery; to manifest a fraternal sympathy in their joys or sorrows, their welfare or their woe. Peace between man and man is valuable, not only as it implies the absence of hostility and strife, and all the dark and frightful evils that follow in their train, but also as it denotes a state of preparation for the interchange of sympathy, and of all those offices of love and kindness, which human beings have it in their power to perform for each other. Those who are truly at peace, are ready, should circumstances permit, to be in friendship. He who feels no hatred to his neighbour, is prepared to love him, the first moment that anything shall occur, to waken a sympathetic feeling in his breast.

The good Samaritan had only to cast a single look upon the wounded Jew, whom till that day he had never seen, to feel a tender interest for him awakened in his heart. In a moment the tide of love and pity, raised by an irresistible attraction, flowed within his bosom, and he hastened to acknowledge, both by word and deed, the kindred tie that bound him to a suffering brother of the human family, nobly regardless of the circumstance, that the particular branch of that family,

to which he happened to belong, was different from his own. He was a fellow-creature, and had fallen among thieves, who had stripped, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. In these circumstances, though he had been born at the farthest pole, or in the inmost deserts of swarthy Africa, he must have felt him to be a neighbour, a near neighbour to his heart. Therefore "he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." See what it is, my brethren, to be devoid of malignant feeling. The character, which our Saviour has so beautifully portrayed, is that of one, over whose mind and heart the miserable prejudices of his countrymen had no power;—who felt no disposition to ask whether any good thing could come out of Judæa or of Galilee,—but was fully prepared to recognize, in every child of his Heavenly Father, a brother of his own. The Jews, it was true, had no dealings with the Samaritans; but the good Samaritan could see no valid reason why they should not have; and he hastened, therefore, to embrace the first opportunity that offered, of establishing, unblamed, an interchange of kindness with a Jew. Had he met him on the public road, a traveller as happily circumstanced as himself, he would have looked upon him (I cannot but think) with charity in his heart, and passed him with a sigh for the wretched prejudices that forbade a kindly greeting; but now his sympathy might flow, unchecked, and unreproved, and he hastened, therefore, to indulge it, feeling, doubtless, that there was a portion of pleasure in it, far more than sufficient to compensate the pain.

Between bodies, which, when separated by a certain interval, repel each other, a strong attraction is often found to prevail, on their being brought into closer contact: and so it is with minds; prejudice and passion may keep them far asunder for a time, but, should circumstances occur to overcome these discordant influences, human sympathies, which, however long they may be dormant, never die, will assert their power to attract and to unite. The bitterest enemies have within them the rudiments of friendship; and different minds, like different particles of matter, are all so constituted, that the All-Wise Disposer may cause them, when He pleases, to approach and to cohere.

"I pray not for these alone," said our blessed Lord, speaking of his first followers, "but for them also who shall believe on me, through their word,"—that is, for all his disciples everywhere,—"that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me."

Distant as it still is, the time, I firmly believe, is coming, when this beautiful prayer shall be fully answered; when all men shall be Christians, and all Christians shall feel themselves one with each other, with Christ, and with the Father; when the whole human race shall be as one family, the loving and beloved children of one Father. This, reason tells us, is the consummation most devoutly to be wished for; and this, Revelation assures us, is the glorious result, to ensure which, all her wonderful apparatus of miracle and prophecy, of Divine doctrines, precepts, and pro-

mises, was provided:—"and I, if I be lifted up," said Jesus, "shall draw all men unto me." "He must reign," says St. Paul, "till he hath put all enemies under his feet; the last enemy, that shall be subdued, is death." The time is coming, therefore, when men shall be universally united, by the same filial spirit to the God who made them, by the same fraternal spirit towards each other; "when they shall not hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain of God;" when "nation shall no longer lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;" when "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."

Yes, my friends, this blessed time is coming, and happy are those who anticipate its arrival, by cultivating in their breasts the spirit of peace and love; who, to the utmost extent of their power, as far as is possible, as much as lieth in them, (for that it is not always possible, in the present state of things, the very form of the apostolic precept would seem to imply,) "live peaceably with all men." Peace is the needful preliminary to all pleasant and profitable intercourse between nation and nation, and between man and man. Where malice is not, love may soon be;—those who are not foes are ready to be friends;—only let the chain of human sympathy remain unbroken, and the electric fluid of love, as soon as God shall send it down from Heaven, will pass along from link to link, swiftly, and without obstruction; but malice and strife sunder the

chain, and arrest the Divine influence in its passage. What war is to nations, strife is to individuals; not only calling their worst passions into play, and prompting them to inflict positive evils on each other, but preventing the communication of all those blessings, physical, intellectual, and moral, which they might otherwise have it in their power, mutually to confer. Who, then, can doubt, that peace with our fellow-men, through whose mediation it is the will of God to bestow His most precious gifts upon us, is a blessing of the highest value? Whether we seek the treasures of the body or the mind, we cannot obtain them in any abundance, without fraternal aid. Where peace is not, plenty and prosperity must be sought in vain.

There is yet another kind of peace, closely allied with both of those that I have mentioned, and assuredly not less important than either of them, which every human being should be anxious to enjoy; and that is, peace with God. If it is desirable that we should harmonize with the brethren of the family, for the sake of the blessings that may flow to us through them, it is even more so, that we should stand well in our filial relation to the great Father of it, the primary Source of all the mercies that we enjoy, even of those which our brethren themselves are instrumental to convey. If we would be at peace with ourselves, we cannot better attain this end, than by striving, in the first instance, to be at peace with God. What wiser plan can the child pursue, if he wishes to be happy, than to cultivate the friendship and favour, and secure the counsel and assistance, of a wise and gracious parent?

The task of self-government is no easy one. To keep a frame so complicated as that of the human mind, with all its powers and faculties, appetites, passions, habits, and affections, in proper order, requires more than human wisdom. We cannot expect a harp of thousand strings to tune itself. Often must it require the friendly interposition of the great Melodist who made it, to restore the injured or the broken chords, or to give them, when relaxed, their proper tension. The machine in this case, it is true, is not a mere machine—an unthinking compound of unthinking parts. The mind does understand something of its own structure, and is, by no means, wholly destitute of power to regulate itself. Need I say, however, that *that* power is partial and imperfect, and that greater wisdom than man possesses must often be invoked, to rectify those disorders, to which his mental, is no less liable than his corporeal frame? Without piety, peace of mind cannot exist for any length of time; and even piety itself is not always able, in this world, to ensure it. Even over the devout and virtuous mind, dark clouds are sometimes known to hang for many a tedious day, which human faith cannot penetrate, or human love dispel, and for the final removal of which, we can look with confidence to Almighty power alone. That power, however, will act at last. Virtue and happiness may be separated for a season here, but must be one hereafter. By filial obedience and resignation, then, the fruits of filial love, let peace with God be sought, and peace within will be the certain, though it may not always be the immediate, or the swift result.

For the sake of peace with our fellow-men, likewise, peace with God is to be earnestly desired. Filial and fraternal love naturally tend to strengthen and preserve each other. Feeling towards our Father as we ought, we shall find it a matter of comparatively little difficulty, to cherish right feelings towards our brethren. "The second commandment," said our Lord, "is like unto the first." It is, in fact, included in it. To love *Him*, in Whom all live and move and have their being, is to love all who live and move and have their being in Him. Malignant feelings towards the creature, are a certain proof that our hearts are not yet affected, as they should be, to the Creator. He hateth, He despiseth nothing that He hath made. Neither shall we, when our sympathy with Him is perfect. In subduing our bitter and angry feelings, in learning to love and pity and forgive, we cannot seek a better or more efficient aid than heartfelt piety. Though even this may not enable us, in the present state of imperfection, to live peaceably with all men,—since, however sincere our wishes, and earnest our endeavours, to do so, all men may not choose to live peaceably with us,—yet it will, at least, powerfully assist us to make the nearest approach to this result, and will console us with the bright prospect of a time when it will be perfectly attained. He who is at peace with God, may indeed suffer for a season, like the Redeemer of the world himself, from the undeserved hostility of his fellow-men, but that time will soon be over, and he may anticipate, with certainty, the day when his bitterest foes shall lament that they had ever sustained that character, and shall rejoice once more to be at peace with him.

Such, then, my friends, are the various species of that peace which our blessed Lord came into the world to procure for us,—peace with God,—with our fellow-men,—and with ourselves.

Peace with God. "Glory to God in the highest," is the first strain of the angelic song. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength," is pronounced, by Jesus, to be the first and great commandment. To make all his followers one with God, as he himself was one with Him, he declares to be the express object of all his toils and sufferings. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself," abolishing, by his death, the distinction that formerly subsisted between Jew and Gentile, "making of twain one new man," and giving both an equally free access to the Father. "Believe me," said our Lord to the woman of Samaria, "the hour cometh, when ye shall, neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father; but the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." He died, and the prophecy was fulfilled. "The handwriting of ordinances," in the strong language of St. Paul, "was blotted out, and taken away, being nailed to the cross." Thenceforward no one people was exclusively recognized as the specially aided and instructed of God, but the partial and preparatory system of Moses gave way to the universal religion of Christ, which invited all the children of men, of every clime, kindred, and nation, of every colour, and every tongue, to draw near, in one spirit, to the common Father, and

to worship and serve Him, with one heart, with the assurance that there never has been, nor ever will be, any real partiality in His dealings; that the good of all is consulted by Him, even when He appears to favour some; that He is "no respecter of persons," but that, in every land and every community, the truly pious, the sincerely virtuous, ever have found, and will find, acceptance in His sight.

No one, I think, can attentively review the precepts, or seriously study the life and character of Jesus, without perceiving, that to infuse a principle of piety into the human breast, to persuade men to feel and act towards God, as filial-minded children towards an all-merciful and gracious Father, was his primary object. Peace with God; not a mere hollow, verbal, temporary truce, but a genuine, deep-seated peace, a lasting friendship, cultivated diligently through the whole of life, and which death, therefore, will have no power to destroy,—this Jesus evidently deemed man's greatest blessing. From youth to age he still rejoiced to be about his Father's business: by frequent meditation on His works and word, and daily communion with Him in the secret offices of prayer, he never ceased to cultivate that holy friendship, which he doubtless regarded, as, at once, his purest pleasure, and his highest honour. His conduct and his precepts unite to prove, that he was far from thinking, as some appear to do, that peace with God may be effectually made, by devoting to His service the last few hours of a life, all the preceding part of which has been spent in ministering to avarice, ambition, sensual pleasure, or other passions equally ig-

noble. No! his doctrine was, that it is impossible to serve both God and Mammon; and that we cannot, without certain loss, and extreme peril of the very worst result, defer, for a single day, the serious consideration of the things that belong unto our peace.

If "Glory to God in the highest" is the first strain of the angelic song, "Peace on earth and goodwill to man" immediately succeeds. To unite all men to each other; to make them feel their common membership in that body, of which Christ was the head; to level every separating wall; to put to flight all national, party, and sectarian animosities; to inculcate, in short, the brotherhood of all God's rational offspring, and to teach us that our neighbour is "the suffering man, though at the pole,"—this was not less the object of the Messiah's mission, than to bring us all to God. For no other end was the Gospel given,—that Gospel, to which the epithet of Peace is not less expressively assigned, than to the God from whom it came, and the Saviour who proclaimed it,—than to bring home to our hearts the often forgotten, never *to be* forgotten truth, that having one God for our Father, we are all of us the children of one family, bound to each other by the fraternal, as surely as we are to Him, by the filial tie. With us, whom the doctrine of Christ has enlightened, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all."

Where, I would ask, is the religion that enforces so urgently, so powerfully, as the Christian, the cultivation of the benevolent, the control of the angry, the suppression and extinction of the malignant feelings?

Listen to the exhortations of the Saviour. Hear how he enjoins upon his followers the law of mutual love; —"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them; and if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same; and if ye lend to them, from whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies; and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest, for He is kind unto the unthankful and the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Surely He may well be called the "Prince of Peace," from whose lips these divine lessons flowed; and mark, my brethren, how his life illustrated them. Do we not see him going about doing good?—scattering bounty everywhere with a liberal and ungrudging hand; freely conferring kindness, as his Father does, on the unthankful and the evil:—for curses returning blessings, and replying to insults and injuries with prayers? All anger, hatred, and malice, are absolutely dead within him; the excess of cruelty cannot draw from him a single imprecation; with him, too, the ruling passion is strong in death; and benevolence, triumphant over every baser feeling, pours forth that prayer, which shall remain recorded in the hearts of his

followers to the latest period of time, teaching them to compassionate even the worst of sinners, and never to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Is not this, my friends, the Prince of Peace? and should we not, if his doctrine and example had its due influence with us, live in love and peace with all our brethren of the human race?

Jesus himself, indeed, foresaw that this would not be the *instant* result of his instructions; that even the Gospel itself would, for a season, prove the source of discord and division, as the healing medicine, when *first* administered, frequently fails to act beneficially on the highly-diseased system, but, on the contrary, is sometimes known, for a time, to aggravate the symptoms. "Think not," said he, "that I am come to bring peace on earth; I am not come to bring peace, but a sword." By men prone to anger, and habituated to strife, he was well aware that the Gospel of peace would, for a time, be perverted into a source of dissension and animosity;—would that *that* time, even now, in the nineteenth century, had passed away! Pass away, however, it will. He who lived and died for us, "shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." "He shall see his seed; he shall prolong his days; and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." His legacy of peace with God, with man, and with our own hearts, shall not have been left in vain. "Peace I leave with you," said he, "my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." My

Christian friends, in the midst of all discouragements,—through evil report and good report,—through trials and difficulties of every kind, let us go on our way rejoicing, anxious only to imbibe, and manifest towards all around us, our Great Master's pious, benevolent, and peaceful spirit; and trusting to the All-wise Disposer, to fulfil His own prophetic word, and accomplish, as He most certainly will, in the appointed time, the final triumph of the Prince of Peace over all the powers of evil. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Amen.

XV.

THE GRAVE OF JESUS.

MATTHEW XXVIII. 6.

"COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE THE LORD LAY."

SUCH was the invitation of the Angel to the faithful women, who, on the day of our Lord's death, had stood at the foot of the Cross, till he whom they loved said, "It is finished," and bowed his head, and gave up the ghost; and who, on the morning of the resurrection, hastened at the early dawn, whilst it was yet dark, to the sepulchre, intending to anoint with sweet spices, the body of their Lord. With them, my friends, let us too approach in imagination, (as some of us, I doubt not, have done heretofore,) and dwell for awhile on the reflections which the deserted tomb of Jesus may suggest.

It was here that the Lord lay. In Adam *all* die; even Jesus himself was for a short time the tenant of the tomb. It was here that the Lord lay,—but here he no longer lies: he is risen, as he said, and become the firstfruits of them that sleep. In Christ *all* shall be made alive. In the tomb of Jesus we behold a beautiful illustration of the mercy of our Heavenly Father,

who permits, for a short season, the sufferings of the good, only that His joy and theirs may be made full, in the conversion of the wicked: who suffers His best Beloved to die in Adam, that, beholding him arise, His thoughtless, foolish, and rebellious children may turn and live in Christ. In the tomb of Jesus, my friends, we clearly see, how He who loves us all, has condescended to our infirmities, graciously shedding the brightest light upon a truth, the knowledge and belief of which, is, of all others, the most essential to our virtue and our happiness. It is not the word alone of Jesus, though even that ought to have sufficed, which assures us, that, "though we die, yet shall we live;" we have his resurrection also. To the evidence of divine testimony, is added, as it were, the brighter evidence of sense.

This is the place where the Lord lay. Here we behold him, pale, powerless, lifeless, the spirit fled, a brother of the worm; a figure, such as we have often wept over, with bitter, speechless sorrow; "and this is he," we hear his heart-broken disciples exclaim, "who was to have delivered Israel." We look again: the life-giving word of Him, "in whom we live and move and have our being," has gone forth, and the bloom is rekindled on his pallid cheek; the stiff and powerless limbs become instinct with motion; he rises; the vestments of the grave are thrown off; the stone is rolled from the mouth of the sepulchre: Jesus goes forth, never more to enter the dark and gloomy mansion: his disciples wonder and rejoice; and now they say, "This indeed *is he* that hath delivered Israel." Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath thus con-

descended to our infirmities. What proof of immortality could have been devised more convincing, more affecting, more persuasive? What thanks do we not owe to Him, Who, that we might not be "faithless, but believing," "spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Not only his death itself, but, by the appointment of a wise and gracious Providence, the various circumstances of it, afflicting as they some of them were, seem designed to confirm our belief in the fact of his resurrection.

That no doubt might be entertained of his having died, his death was inflicted by bitter and inveterate enemies; it was violent and public: that no collusion might be suspected with his disciples, they themselves were disheartened, and dispersed; were "offended because of him;" "forsook him and fled:" that the removal of his body might not be imputed to his friends, the sepulchre was in a well-known situation, and guarded by his enemies. Vain, for their own purposes, were the precautions of those who would fain have crushed our faith in the bud, and consigned it, with its author, to the tomb. "The arm of the Lord could not be shortened." On the appointed day, and at the appointed hour, Jesus rose from the grave. For themselves, it is true, they could do nothing; but the purposes of the Lord—how unwillingly and unconsciously soever—they were obliged to execute. By proclaiming to the world the certainty of our Saviour's death, by establishing it on unquestionable evidence, the bitterest enemies of our faith have contributed largely to its confirmation. They crucified, they pierced, they

entombed; they sealed, and set a guard over, his tomb; and yet on the third day he rose, as he had prophesied. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay,"—where his persecutors laid, but could not confine him. Why was he thus suffered for awhile to be the lifeless tenant of a tomb, but that, looking upon him there, our faith might be confirmed, and the certainty and the glory of his resurrection appear to us the brighter, viewed in contrast with the deep, unbreathing silence, and sepulchral gloom, of the narrow house hollowed in the rock by Joseph of Arimathea?

First, then, my friends, let us learn, at the tomb of Jesus, a lesson of heartfelt and ardent gratitude to the Father of mercies. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Blessed, for ever blessed, be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, even to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us."

For every blessing the tribute of the grateful heart is due, in the first instance, to the Great First Cause; for not only is He the First Cause, He is, in the highest sense, the immediate Bestower of every good and perfect gift. He is not merely the eternal Fountain from which springs a Ganges or a Nile, destined to be fed and magnified, in its fertilizing progress, by a thousand other streams; He is the great Deep, whence every rivulet and every rill, that in succession pours its

contribution into the common channel, derives its cool and crystal supply. Were the everlasting reservoir to fail, not the perennial fountain of the Nile or the Ganges alone, but all the lesser springs, "that run amongst the hills, at which the beasts of the field drink, and the wild asses quench their thirst," would be absorbed, and disappear. Yes, my brethren; God is not the First Cause only, He is the vital principle, the needful support of all second causes also. Without Him, not even the rational and voluntary agent can contribute to his fellow's welfare. It is He who must give to the benefactor the power and the disposition to communicate, and to the beneficiary the ability and inclination to enjoy.

Whilst, then, at the tomb of Jesus, we recall to mind all the unspeakable benefits that we derive from his death, to the God and Father of Jesus let the first and warmest tribute of our gratitude be paid, as to the Being who supported him, from the outset of his course to its consummation; who, till his hour was come, and his work was finished, was in him, the principle of life, the animating motive, the strong support, the sufficient consolation.

Yet, while the warmest gratitude is due to God, for this and for every other blessing, we are not forbidden, but, on the contrary, encouraged, both by reason and revelation, to cherish similar sentiments, though doubtless in an inferior degree, to the voluntary instruments of His bounty, amongst whom, in every Christian's heart, his Saviour holds the first place. Here, then, is the *second* lesson which we may learn at the tomb of

Jesus,—a lesson of gratitude to our Redeemer. Look in there, my friends, and confess that never was there a scene better fitted to excite this sacred feeling. Behold "the Man of sorrows" as he rests from his labours, and sleeps the deep sleep of death. "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit,"—these were the last words he uttered upon the Cross: and is not the sweet serenity, with which he uttered them, still visible in his countenance? Does not the calm smile still play there, which seemed to say, even before he departed, "Father, Thou hast heard me, and lo! I am already with Thee!" How lovely is he in death, whose life was love, whose dying hour was the scene of his noblest triumphs, whose very cross,—merciful Heaven! that the wickedness of man should have left him no other place!—was the brightest theatre of his benevolence. Regard, my fellow-Christians, if you can, with indifference,—if you can, without love and gratitude even, the still and death-like features of this friend of man, of him whose love you have seen to be invincible by torture, strong even as death and the grave, rising above the agonies of crucifixion, in his sublime prayer for his guilty murderers, in his joyful welcome of the penitent transgressor, in his last tender bequest of his mother to his friend.

Fellow-Christians, if these recollections awake not your love and sympathy, if none but selfish interests can move you, behold the emaciated countenance, the worn-out frame, of your blessed Master! Whence these visible traces of care, and anxiety, and sorrow? Whence these marks of premature exhaustion and decay? Whence, but

from the deep interest that filled His breast for you, and for your brethren? "When the soldiers came to Jesus, they found that he was dead already." He, who had endured the agony of the garden, could not support, so long as his miserable companions, the torments of the cross. The spirit truly, had it been necessary, would have struggled longer, but the earthly mansion had fallen into ruins, and, unrenovated, could no longer contain its heavenly guest. "He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

What then were the labours that, previous to his crucifixion, had thus reduced and exhausted the frame of our blessed Master? They were probably, for the most part, labours of the mind. That the mind and body are most intimately connected; that the too vigorous and long-continued action of the former, is attended by consequences unfavourable to the latter; and that great cares and great anxieties may press, with fatal and destructive weight, on some parts of the frail corporeal structure; these are truths which every one's experience will perhaps enable him to testify. We have read of statesmen, who have died martyrs to their country, in the council-room and the cabinet; and instances are not rare, of literary labourers, who have toiled out a young existence, and prematurely laid down their lives, in the retirement of the closet. But what, my friends, are the interests which fill the breast of the statesman toiling for his country,—what the cares which rend the bosom of the parent, spending himself for his offspring,—what are they, when compared with those interests which Jesus had to administer, with those cares which Jesus

must have felt? To him were entrusted the interests, not of one nation, but of every nation under heaven. His cares were not for a single family, but for all the families of the earth. "He was to be lifted up" (painful, yet glorious elevation!) "that he might draw all men unto him."

Think, my friends, what you feel, when some arduous duty is assigned to you, on the proper discharge of which, the happiness of some dear friend, or beloved relative, is to depend. When the possibility of failure suggests itself, what anxieties distract your breast! As the moment of decisive action approaches, how does your rest desert you, and what contests of hope and fear are waged within! If such are your feelings, when the question is merely, whether or not you are the destined benefactor of a friend, think what must have been his feelings, whose conduct was to fix, or forfeit his claim, to the high privilege of being the Saviour of a world! Estimate, if you can, the violence of the conflict, when love contended alone, in the Redeemer's bosom, against the dreadful fear, nay, the certainty, of approaching shame, desertion, insult, mockery, torment, death!—glorious indeed, was the final triumph of that love, which at length prevailed, to the casting out of all fear; but bitter must the internal contest have been nor will it be a subject of wonder, to the thoughtful mind, that feeble mortality should almost have sunk beneath it.

When, then, my friends, you look into the tomb of Jesus, and there behold the care-worn and emaciated countenance of the "man of sorrows," dwell on the in-

structive spectacle, read in it all the history of a Saviour's love. For *you* were his anxieties, his fears, his struggles with himself. He saw the invaluable blessings which his obedience was to procure for you, and his whole soul was bent to the performance of his work: all his prayers were, that he might have strength for its accomplishment. The salvation of mankind was the object, and failure, to him, would have been misery; nay, to him, success itself was to have its pains. Jesus felt for all, and at the very time he welcomed nations into his bosom, he could weep over fallen Jerusalem, he could lament that deep infatuation, which for a season, he foresaw, was to make even his gospel the ground of dissension, and place the exterminating sword in the hand of the Christian disciple. The pains of death were ever before his eyes, yet they could not move him a step out of his course; a wish might have freed him at any moment from insult and from torture, yet that wish was, to the last gasp, resolutely suppressed.

Behold, then, the man! see what a work love could unfold in him! Read, in his exhausted frame, the consequences of his spiritual warfare, and let your attachment to him be strengthened. If perfection and loveliness of virtue, if the weight and value of benefits conferred, are the truest grounds of love, then, second only to our love of God, should be that of our Redeemer. Were we to meditate often at his tomb, and to revive, from time to time, the impressions which that solemn scene is fitted to inspire, I am persuaded we should feel this.

In the third place, I would observe, that at the tomb of Jesus, we may learn a lesson of resignation under all

the ills of life. Who now shall doubt that the afflicted may be the favoured children of the Most High? who now shall assert that temporal evils are always the inflictions of an angry God? Ye good distressed, no longer ask, in doubt, whether your Father loves you; never more imagine that ye are forsaken of Him. Look into the tomb of Jesus; see there your great Exemplar, your forerunner, not in virtue only, but in suffering,—and be comforted. This is the glory of our religion; it is not the religion of the few, but of the many; not of the rich, and great, and powerful alone, but of the poor, the needy, and afflicted also. It has treasures and consolations for all; but especially for those who most stand in need of them. The death of Christ has sanctified the sufferings and sorrows of humanity; it has converted them almost into joys. Shall I not taste of the cup which my Saviour drank even to the dregs? Shall I dread the dreary mansion which he once hallowed by his presence? Considerations like these, have brought home comfort to the heart of many a poor afflicted Christian, stretched on the bed of anguish, or sinking into the tomb.

"In speaking of the sepulchre, in *our* religion," says an eloquent writer, "our tone is raised, our voice acquires greater firmness: we feel that this tomb alone is truly worthy of man: the monument of the idolater tells us of nothing but the past—that of the Christian speaks also of the future." Yes, my friends, the sepulchre of the Christian disciple, like that of his Master, though it speaks to us mournfully of the past, sends forth, nevertheless, a voice the most cheering concern-

ing the future. A man of sorrows may rest in it; "a man of sorrows" rested likewise in the tomb of Jesus: a poor man;—he who slept in that tomb, whilst he lived, "knew not where to lay his head:"—one persecuted by his enemies, and forsaken by his friends;—alas! such also was the lot of him, who occupied the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea. Why, then, should the afflicted Christian complain? If he suffers, it is with his Master; and how glorious is the reward prepared for him! How bright the dawn of that eternal day, which is even now about to burst upon the darkness which surrounds him. Let the afflicted sufferer, then, let the sorrow-stricken mourner, take his stand by the tomb of his Master; let him see him consigned to the dark mansion, by the hands of his weeping followers, pale, lifeless, sorrow-worn,—the ruin of the holiest, the most benevolent, and the most virtuous, but the most afflicted of human beings. Is this, indeed, (he will perhaps be tempted to exclaim,) the well-beloved Son of the Father? A few short hours, and the question is answered; the stone is rolled away, and Jesus is risen, and is gone forth to hold sweet communion with his brethren, before he ascends to his Father,—to suffer, and to die no more.

This is the solution of one of the most perplexing enigmas of human life. In Jesus Christ we behold the first-fruits of them that sleep. Where he is, there we shall be also.

> "See now the cause
> Why unassuming worth in secret lives,
> And dies neglected:—why the good man's share
> In life is gall and bitterness of soul."

The tomb of Jesus explains it all. There we learn that the sufferings of virtue, though they may be severe, are but temporary, and, on the other side of the dark valley, shall meet with a more than ample compensation.

Such, then, my friends, are the lessons that we may draw from this deeply-interesting portion of the Evangelical narrative: a lesson of devout gratitude to the Father, from Whom we have received the unspeakably precious gift of the Son,—a lesson of grateful affection to that Son, who, in compliance with his Father's will, quickened by disinterested love for his brethren, refused not to spend himself and to be spent for their sakes,—and, lastly, a lesson of patient submission under all the ills of life,—ills which our Saviour bore himself in all their bitterness, and has taught us how to endure while God wills, to improve for our souls' benefit, and to convert at length into eternal blessings. May God, of His infinite mercy, give us wisdom and strength to do so! Amen.

XVII.

A SAVIOUR TOUCHED WITH THE FEELING OF OUR INFIRMITIES.

JOHN XII. 27, 28.

"NOW IS MY SOUL TROUBLED, AND WHAT SHALL I SAY? FATHER, SAVE ME FROM THIS HOUR? BUT FOR THIS CAUSE CAME I UNTO THIS HOUR. FATHER, GLORIFY THY NAME."

"IN all things,"—says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ,—"it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." And, in another passage, the same writer describes our Lord as one, "who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and, being made perfect, became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." In these passages, the sacred writer evi-

dently refers to the proofs, which our Lord gave, in the closing scenes of his life, by the anguish which he expressed, both in the near anticipation and actual sufferance of his ignominious and painful death, that he was no stranger to the innocent infirmities of our frail nature, and that, even in him, willing as the spirit was, beyond example, to do and suffer all things for his Father's sake, the flesh was weak. And how greatly, my friends, is the value of his life and example enhanced to us, by this very circumstance! Man is born to trouble and to death; it is the lot of all of us to suffer, at some period of our lives, and to die at last. No child of Adam can long remain unsmitten by calamity, in one or other of its numerous forms. Disease in body or in mind, worldly losses and bereavements, wounded affections and disappointed hopes,—some of these are sure to overtake us before we die, and death is, as it were, an abridgment of them all;—wresting from us every earthly treasure, extinguishing every earthly hope, invading us at once in mind, body, and estate, and consigning all we are, and have, to the dark grave. Our existence is commenced in tears;—pain and grief often shade its progress;—and "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," is always the sad and sorrowful conclusion!

Who, then, can fail to discern the wisdom and mercy of the decree, that the Saviour of suffering and dying creatures, should himself be made subject to suffering and death? In him it was designed that we should have a perfect example of all human excellence; but how much of human excellence consists in the submis-

sive and virtuous endurance of the various ills which flesh is heir to, and the steadfast resolution to persevere in the discharge of duty, through toil, and suffering, and danger, through evil report and good report, even unto death! For this reason it was evidently desirable, not only that our Lord should be exposed to trials of this kind, but likewise that he should be so constituted, as to leave no doubt on any mind, that he actually *felt* them to be trials. Doubtless, our Lord might have been made, (if He who frames our nature as he pleases had so ordained,) incapable of pain or death;—or, he might have received such a supply of inward strength, as to render him wholly superior to them;—but where, then, would have been the benefit of his example, to those whose lot it is to suffer and to die? Had Jesus manifested no sensibility of bodily or mental pain, no fear of ignominy, of torture, or of death, it might have been urged, with great appearance of reason, that his feelings were not human, that he had not human trials to contend with, and could not, therefore, exhibit human virtues. As it is, on the contrary, having certain proofs that our Lord was acutely and delicately sensitive, both in his bodily and mental frame, and that pain and sorrow had free access, through the usual avenues, to his mind, we know how to appreciate his calm endurance, his unshrinking fortitude, his meek submission, his resolute obedience. Had we heard of no trouble of the soul, no groanings of the spirit, no exceeding sorrowfulness even unto death; had we never seen the tears of compassion on his cheek, or the drops of anguish on his brow; had we never read of his praying for himself,

that he might be spared the bitter cup, or of his weeping,—as though he had forgotten his power to save,—in sympathy with others; had he always appeared to us the unmoved, though benignant spectator of others' woes, the apathetic supporter of his own,—we might easily have believed, indeed, that a superior being had appeared amongst us, to teach us by wise precepts how to act and to endure, but we could never have supposed that his example was designed for us to imitate, or that, as human beings, we could possibly be expected to act as he did.

In the proofs which we possess, that our Saviour felt as human beings feel, we have an additional assurance that he was designed to be our exemplar, as well as our instructor; and that it is not only right, but possible, by God's assistance, to model our conduct upon his, and to attain to some resemblance of that virtue, which we may not hope to equal. In the fact that the Redeemer of the world was formed, as to his fleshly structure, if I may so express myself, in Nature's finest mould,—that his sensations and sympathies were peculiarly active and powerful,—that he was tenderly alive to every feeling that belongs to man as man,—in this fact I think that I discern a striking indication of the Great Ordainer's wisdom. It is in the regulation of the strongest feelings, that the highest virtue is displayed; it is when the perceptions of pleasure and pain are most acute, that there is most to admire in the dignity of self-command. The keenness of our Saviour's feelings, as they now and then burst forth, not only serve to set off, by contrast, the usual calm gran-

deur and dignified repose of his character, but attest the force of soul that was required, to preserve that grandeur and repose unviolated. The tears and groans of Jesus demonstrate to us, that apathy was not the secret of his self-control. No one can say that he acted more wisely, because he felt less acutely, than other men; that he seemed to rise superior to passion, solely because he was passionless; that he committed no sin, merely in consequence of his exemption from all temptation. Blessed be God, we have not only the assurance, but the proofs,—in those occasional bursts of human feeling, which nature prompted, and virtue did not forbid,—in the anguish, for instance, with which he anticipated his own bitter trial,—in the tears which he shed over Jerusalem, when he prophesied her fall,—in his tender and irrepressible sympathy with the sorrows of Mary and of Martha, even at the very moment when he was prepared to dry up the fountain from which they sprang, and to convert them into joy, —in these, I say, we have the proof that he was, indeed, as the sacred writer asserts, "made in all respects like unto his brethren,"—"tried at all points, as we are, yet without sin." Who can fail to perceive, that he is, on this account, a more perfect example for us? that, having suffered and been tempted himself, he is peculiarly qualified to succour them that are tempted? Who can forbear to justify the wisdom and goodness of God, in the appointment, that those who are called upon to take up their cross, should have to bear it after him who was crucified? that so, *example* might inspire that fortitude, which *precept* alone might have vainly

endeavoured to infuse. Active virtue we might have learned by example from God Himself, or from any of His angels; but *passive* virtue could thus have been taught us, with full efficacy, only by a brother of our race, by one who must have suffered like ourselves, that he might teach us how to suffer.

And such an instructor, my friends, such an exemplar, God has given us. With joy and gratitude let us receive the gift. To us the cross shall be no stumbling-block. It is the surest proof that our Saviour is such a one as God would be most likely to bestow on such a race as ours; the very Saviour that frail dying men should most rejoice to welcome, because he goes before them in every path of duty, however dangerous and difficult to tread,—deserts them at no point or period of their course,—faces every peril that they are called to face,—and refuses not to enter even the dark valley with them, to suffer and to die for their sakes. I ask you, my brethren, whether it was not such a leader that we wanted? Have we not reason to give thanks to the God who placed him over us, and to confess, with heart-felt joy, that "it became Him, through Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through suffering?"

"Now is my soul troubled," says our Saviour, in my text, anticipating that event, in the more immediate prospect of which, he was soon after overcome with still keener anguish. The soul of Jesus was troubled. Even his well-regulated spirit could be disturbed by the foresight, and afflicted by the access, of misfortune. See

here, then, my friends, the proofs that neither a cold indifference to approaching evil, nor a stoical insensibility under sufferings endured, is expected or required from us. Not as men only, but as Christians also, we are permitted to manifest, by such outward signs as nature prompts and reason does not pronounce extravagant, that we feel pain and sorrow to be real evils. We may humbly deprecate the affliction before it comes; we may grieve for it, in virtuous moderation, when it has arrived. Jesus prayed that the cup of bitterness might pass from him; Jesus groaned, in anguish, and cried with a loud voice, when he suffered himself; and when he witnessed the sufferings of others, "Jesus wept." It is not criminal then, "to be troubled in soul," either when we foresee, or when we feel calamity. Prayers that breathe submission, while they implore relief, and tears that flow, not from weak impatience, but from manly sorrow, far from being displeasing, are acceptable to Him who has pronounced His blessing on the virtuous mourner, and pledged His sacred promise, that he "shall be comforted."

In what spirit the prayer of the afflicted soul should be offered up, we cannot perhaps better learn from any passage of Scripture, than from that before us. Our Lord had come up to Jerusalem, to partake of his last passover; and not many days, not many hours indeed had to elapse, before he was to close his mission, and consummate his obedience by a painful and ignominious death. He spoke of that event, and endeavoured, not without success, to reconcile his mind to it, by the con-

sideration of the glorious and happy consequences that were to result from it, both to himself and to the world. As the seed, sown in the bosom of the earth, undergoes a partial dissolution, and to the unpractised eye might seem to perish, but in reality prolongs and multiplies its own existence, putting forth, in due season, first the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear, thus producing many from the root of one; so likewise did our Lord reflect, that by dying he too should live; that his blood should be the fruitful seed, as it were, of the universal church; and that, uplifted from the earth upon the cross, he should draw *all* men unto him. "The hour is come," said he, "that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that hateth his life, in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." These considerations weighed with him; they were amply sufficient to determine him to act. For the joy that was set before him,—the joy of sowing the first seed, from which the moral harvest was to spring, —the joy of originating blessings, of which countless multitudes of human beings should partake, through ages without end,—for the sake of this, our Lord submitted, nay chose, to suffer all that he was called to suffer,—to endure the cross, and to despise the shame. Yet even in *his* breast, nature had her struggle; nor could even *his* virtue, perfect as it was, put to flight without an effort, that natural dread of suffering and of death, which clings to every tenant of a fleshly frame.

How beautifully does our text exhibit both the struggle and the victory. "Now is my soul troubled," said he, "and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name." As though he had said:—"The prospect of the sufferings that await me,—of treachery, desertion, insult, torture, death,—of all the woes that I am destined to endure, both from cruel enemies, and faithless friends, troubles my soul. How, then, under the influence of such feelings, shall I approach my God? What prayer shall my grieved and harassed spirit offer to Him? Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? Doubtless this is the petition which fear and grief,—the feelings of the moment,—might wring from me. But is it, that which my knowledge of my Father's will should lead me to address to Him? Do I not *know*, that the sufferings and death which I so much dread, are the appointed consummation of the work that my Father hath given me to do? Have I not lived for the world, that I might die for the world? And shall I leave my work of love unfinished? Shall I have brought it so near to its completion, and yet not complete it? Father, Thy will be done, Thy name be glorified! Do Thou supply me with the needful strength to do and suffer all for Thy sake; and follow with Thy fruitful blessing my work of filial love. Father, glorify Thy name!"

My Christian friends, while, in every hour of affliction, we console ourselves with the thought, that the troubles of the soul,—the natural feelings which compel us, irresistibly, to shrink back from suffering, and deprecate

calamity, cannot be criminal, since our great Exemplar shared them with us,—let us learn, at the same time, to cherish his resigned and patient spirit, and to bend our will, even as he did, with resolute submission, to our Father's. Even when we cannot refrain from saying with him, "Now is my soul troubled,"—let our hearts, like his, draw near to God for support and consolation; let the language which they speak be that of prayer; and let the prayers, which flow from them, breathe nothing but submission to the Divine will,—the earnest desire that God's name may be glorified in all things, and that we may be made the means and instruments of glorifying it, whether by our doings or our sufferings, whether by our zealous and active exertions in imitation of him "who went about doing good," or by our calm fortitude, our meek, unmurmuring patience, resembling his, whose supreme wish it was to make the will of God his own, who therefore suppressed the prayer that nature prompted, "Father, save me from this hour," and nobly substituted for it, that solemn effusion of pure piety and warm benevolence conjoined, "Father, glorify Thy name."

We should reflect, my Christian friends, (and surely there is comfort and joy in the reflection,) that no affliction can come upon us, without the express appointment of our Heavenly Father. No single grief, trial, or trouble of life, that we feel, springs from the dust: no blind necessity, no fickle chance, can possibly mar our peace: no hand but that of God can touch us: the burden that is imposed, God imposes; the blessing that is taken away, God takes away. When the event has happened,

whether it be of sorrow or of joy, we can always be sure that it was divinely appointed for us; with Jesus we can always say, "For this cause came I to this hour." We cannot, indeed, like him, foresee with certainty any coming sorrow or calamity. That great additional trial of virtue,—for such, surely, he must have felt it,—we are spared. Before the blow has descended, therefore, before the stroke of calamity has smitten us, even though we fear it, we may yield to nature's promptings, and pray to God, with even less of reserve than our great Master could—though resignation should always be mingled with our prayers, and we should never lose sight of the probability that our weak wishes and God's perfect will may be at variance,—to save us from the trying and afflictive hour. But when that hour has come, —when the stroke has actually been inflicted,—when we feel that we have been sorely smitten, and that the hand of God is heavy upon us, what remains? What, brethren, but that we bow ourselves in the dust before Him?—that we kiss the hand that smote us?—that we confess that we knew not, like Him, what was for our own good, but offered up, in ignorance, our weak petition?—that, finally, we pray for wisdom to discern, and grace to lay to heart, the lessons of His chastening hand, and say, with Jesus, "Father, glorify Thy name?"

Yes, be it ours, beloved brethren,—for this is the most important thing of all for us,—to make a practical improvement of every painful, as well as every pleasing lesson, that God gives; to see to it that He does not send, either His bounties or bereavements, His blessings or His chastisements, in vain. Be this our heart's

first question, when either joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain visits us; 'how shall we use this for our soul's benefit? how shall we cause it to glorify the name of God?' If, when our blessings are taken from us, we learn to set a juster value on the blessings that remain, to enjoy them with more grateful piety, and to improve them with more conscientious diligence; if, when we are bereaved of those we love, we learn to feel and cherish a holier ardour to cultivate the virtues they possessed, and to shun the sins or follies that dimmed or darkened their characters, or to discharge with zeal the duties that they once performed, or perhaps to occupy, as far as possible, with credit, the places that they filled; to be, if possible, to the world which they have left, all that they were, (and even more, should God graciously endow us with the power,) and to prepare, by a more fervent piety, a more active and unwearied benevolence, and a more vigilant self-government, for that better and happier world to which our best and fondest hopes, both for ourselves and those whom we love, should lift up our thoughts;—if, I say, we thus act, we shall convert our sorrows into joys, our bereavements into blessings, our trifling losses into boundless gains, our short separations into eternal friendships.

God, of His infinite mercy, grant that we may all of us thus improve all the sorrows that our Father may have already sent us, or may hereafter send! As we surround the death-beds and the tombs of our dear relatives and friends, one after another, may our faith and hope be strengthened, may our love be warmed,

may our virtue be invigorated; and while, in thought, we pursue their departed spirits into a brighter world, may we remember that our post of duty is for a season longer here; and, looking upward, may we seek and find that aid, in the endurance of trial, the resistance of temptation, and the performance of duty, which the Father of mercies is ever ready to accord, to those who sincerely ask it of Him, and who combine the energy of virtuous effort with the humility of prayer. "Father, glorify Thy name," let us say, in the true spirit of devotion; and though no audible voice shall answer to our prayer, yet, by the ear of faith, the answer shall be heard, "I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again." Amen.

XVIII.

THE ONLY SURE REFUGE.

JOHN XVI. 32.

"AND YET I AM NOT ALONE, BECAUSE THE FATHER IS WITH ME."

"IN all things," says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, "it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren;" and our text supplies one of many proofs that this was indeed the case; and that, though he has been exalted over us, to be a Prince and a Saviour, and has received from his Father "the name which is above every name," his heart was no stranger to human sympathies. In him we have not a high priest who cannot be "touched with a feeling of our infirmities." He, like those whom he was not ashamed to call his brethren, was a social, sympathetic being, whose nature prompted him to seek the intercourse of his fellow-beings, to weep with them that wept, and to rejoice with them that rejoiced.

At the marriage feast of Cana, he was not an uninterested guest, nor indisposed to add his contribution to the sum of innocent enjoyment. At the tomb of Lazarus, notwithstanding his power to save, his sympathizing spirit caught the contagion of grief. In the

garden of Gethsemane, he would fain have wished that the disciples, whom he loved, could have watched with him one hour; and, from the passage before us, we learn that the thought of desertion and solitude was painful to him, and that he was anxious to seek, in his piety, balm for the wound which his benevolence was called to sustain. "Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

How perfectly lovely, in all its features, and yet, at the same time, how beautifully consistent and true to nature, is the character of Jesus! Truth must have guided the pencil of the Evangelists. No other artist, it may be affirmed, without hesitation, could have thrown in such exquisite touches, and given such a harmony to the whole picture. Who can fail to perceive, that he, who uttered the words of my text, is the same being that wept for the sorrows of others, at the very time that he was putting forth the Divine power to relieve them, and that would have felt gratified with the wakeful love of his disciples, even in the bitter hour when intense feeling prompted him to go apart, and seek relief in prayer. In the breast of Jesus, the love of his Father, and that of his brethren, was inseparably mingled. He could be troubled in spirit at their frailties, even while he rejoiced in the consciousness of his Father's favour, and in the prospect of glorifying His name. He could regret that they should desert him, even while his heart acknowledged, that in the bright

and benignant presence of his Father, a sense of desertion and solitude could not be reasonably felt, even for a moment. "Ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me."

God only is sufficient for Himself: all finite creatures seek, because they need, support;—they need support from without; they look round them, naturally, for some prop by which their weakness may be sustained; they must lean upon each other for a season, if they have not wisdom, in the first instance, to lay hold upon their final rock and resting-place in God. With all his power, wisdom, and goodness, Jesus made no profession or pretence, of being an insulated, independent being. He acknowledged, on the contrary, that it was not good or pleasant for him to be alone. He sought not to conceal that he desired comfort and satisfaction, even from the sympathy of man; and he always avowed himself to be, like every other creature, entirely dependent upon God. With that Great Being he held constant intercourse, prostrating himself before Him in the lowliest adoration, ascribing to Him all he had, and seeking from Him all he hoped or wished for. Jesus lived, and moved, and had his intellectual and moral, no less than his physical being, in God. In His friendship, he sought and found an infinite, exhaustless source of comfort and delight. Kindly and cordially did he associate with his brethren; and many were the proofs he gave, that he was not indifferent to their affection and regard; but in his Father's love he had a treasure infinitely more precious, of which no accident

of life, or stroke of fate, could rob him; from the enjoyment of which he could never be debarred, and which, therefore, he prized above all price. He lived "as seeing Him who is invisible," and was, therefore, never left without that needful aliment of every finite social nature, the cheering and supporting presence of a friend. He could not be alone, who not merely knew, but felt,—for the feeling, in this case, is not less essential than the knowledge,—that the Father was always with him.

My Christian friends, the companions of our journey are, like ourselves, mortal. No love that we bear them, how intense soever; no confidence and trust, that we repose in them; no plea, that we can urge of their value and importance to us, can retain them here a single moment beyond their appointed time. They must leave us, or we them. We must be separated by the accidents of time; we must be separated by death. How desirable is it, then, that we should not place too exclusive a dependence on each other; that we should have a common refuge and stay, of which we need not fear to be deprived. Flowers, of frail texture, and of feeble stem, if they would remain unscathed by wind or rain, must rest upon, or twine round, something stronger than themselves. Many vines may hang their ripe clusters round a single elm, that would cling to each other for support in vain. There is a Rock of Ages on which all the children of men must rest securely, though not one of them has power to uphold his brother. To creatures, so weak as we are, so little able to depend upon our own resources, so naturally disposed to seek for, and rejoice in, the countenance and counsel and co-

operation of others; to beings, in short, so essentially social, a more painful idea can scarcely be presented, than that of absolute solitude. We all of us feel that it is not good for us to be alone. In the friendship of our Heavenly Father, then, it will be our wisdom to seek for the best, if not the sole security, that we shall never be so. God is the only ever-present friend. Amongst those individuals of our species with whom our lot in life is cast, we shall probably meet with very few, to whom we can give, with full consent of heart, the sacred name of friend. How rarely are those united by circumstances and situation, whom similarity, or perhaps, I should say, adaptation of character, has qualified to feel the strongest mutual regard! "A man may have a thousand intimate acquaintances," some wise man has said, "and not a friend amongst them all. If you have one friend, think yourself happy." The experience of most of us, has probably enabled us to testify to the at least partial truth of this observation. We have all known many, whom we have admired and valued at a distance, with whom we have sometimes, perhaps often, found it profitable, as well as pleasant, to associate on terms of friendliness, and whose close friendship, we doubt not, had Providence put us in possession of the blessing, might have been of inestimable value. Such persons, we deem it no slight matter to have known, even as acquaintances: if we can add, that our knowledge of them was in any degree intimate, we feel that we have still greater reason to be grateful; but small indeed is the proportion, even of those for whom we have felt the highest and most sincere esteem,

with whom we can reciprocate, (and reciprocation, in this case, is essential) in its full meaning, the sacred name of friend. "Be at peace with many; nevertheless, have but one counsellor of a thousand," is a precept which necessity would force upon us, if wisdom did not. In the concerns of any single individual, but few can be expected to take a lively interest. In his private and peculiar views and feelings, no man can reasonably expect the cordial sympathy of *many*. We have all our separate circles; those, with whom we constantly associate on close terms of intimacy, cannot be very numerous; and from amongst them we must select, for the most part, the still smaller number of our confidential friends. Happy shall we be, if we find even a few, who will cordially sympathize with us, and with whom we can fully sympathize, on subjects of mutual interest.

"A faithful friend is indeed the medicine of life," and "he that hath found such a one, hath found a treasure." I suppose the treasure found. I suppose that you have acquired, not merely a single friend, deserving of the name,—though that were more than falls to the lot of every one, but as large a number as it is possible for any individual to gain and keep; yet I would ask, can you have these with you always and everywhere? Will they never refuse, can they always consent, to go with you where you go, and stay with you where you stay, and wake and watch with you when you wake and watch? Even if you could be sure of their sympathy, can you persuade yourself that they will never be voluntarily absent, or torn reluctantly from your side, at the very season when it shall be most needed, and, if it

could be given, would bring the greatest consolation? Alas! my brethren, we all know, by experience, that this cannot be. Our dearest friends must often leave us, in the silence of a solitary home; and we must often leave them, to go forth into a busy world, in which we soon learn the truth of that observation of the great philosopher,—"that a crowd is not company, and that faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love." Or, if it was not so, if we could spend our whole lives in the society of those for whom we feel the truest and tenderest regard, yet must there be many important occasions and conjunctures, when we cannot, by any possibility, enjoy or even ask their sympathy. However willing the spirit may be, the flesh is weak. Hours there will be, during which the dearest friend we have, must long for our aid, or advice, or sympathy, in vain. While his disciples were tossed by a storm, and threatened by all the terrors of the deep, even Jesus, overcome by fatigue, and unaware of their danger and distress, slumbered calmly on a pillow; and thus also, in *his* hour of bitter anguish, sleep visited *their* weary eyelids; and because of the weakness of the flesh, though they tarried near him, as he desired, they did not watch with him. Slumber will often close the eyes of the strongest human affection; and many a friendless hour must the poor victim of pain and sickness, or of calamity and sorrow, whose lids sleep will not visit, pass in the night-watches, unless he can invoke the cheering presence, never refused when it is asked for, of that good Being, that untired friend and guardian of Israel, who never slumbereth

nor sleepeth, who is about our bed by night and our path by day, and understandeth all our ways.

Happy the man, who can appropriate to himself the pious breathings of the Psalmist,—"My mouth shall praise Thee, O God, with joyful lips, when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches. Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me." Great must be his comfort, in reflecting upon that ever present, ever compassionate and pitying God, who "knoweth our downsitting and our uprising, and understandeth our thoughts afar off; who compasseth our paths and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways;" from whom the darkness cannot hide, and who, having framed and fashioned our mortal bodies with marvellous and fearful skill, can regulate as He pleases the movements of their parts, give every chord its proper tension, restore the harmony which accident or disease has disturbed, and make the pains, which He pleases to inflict on the body, promotive of the peace and joy and welfare of the soul. My friends, let us only make God our friend, and we shall never know the gloom of solitude; our hearth, however lonely the world may deem it, shall be cheered by a constant guest; when we go forth from the home we love, to mingle with the busy crowd of men, alike ignorant and regardless of our sorrows and our joys, One ever faithful Friend shall still journey by our side, to whom nothing that we think, or say, or do,—nothing that can affect our real happiness,—will be indifferent. Whether we

sleep or wake, that Friend will still be with us, to watch over our slumbers, or to cheer, with the whisperings of His love, our wakeful and restless hours.

Even if we could ensure the enlivening and consoling presence of our earthly friends, during the whole of each successive stage of our mortal journey, if we could take and keep them with us while life remained, which we cannot do, yet even in that case, there must still be one occasion, when we must relinquish the hope of such companionship; though we have lived here in society, yet unattended, without retinue, without friend, we must pass hence. "Why," asks the poet,—

> "Why should we faint, and fear to live alone,
> Since all alone, as Heaven has willed, we die?"

"I shall die alone," says Pascal. Not even by their simultaneous death, could our dearest friends ensure us their company in that last journey. Here, at least, no human resource remains; naked we came, and naked we depart; we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out of it. We accompany the body to the grave, but the soul has taken a still earlier departure; and no eye of faithful friend, affectionate kinsman, tender parent, fond partner, or loving child, has been able to follow it on its solitary way. Yet even here, religion comes to our aid; even here, the Eternal Friend does not forsake us; even at that latest moment, after the last farewell is taken, and the eye has closed for ever on this mortal scene, the parting spirit of the Christian, if we could hear its breathings, would still say with Christ,—"and yet I

am not alone, for the Father is with me." If we have made God our friend, He will be with us, not less surely, not less faithfully, not less paternally, in death than He was in life. All that have ever lived, still live to God: the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob is not less their God now, than when they trod the earth, as living men. Whatever region has received them, whatever be their present state, whether, as some suppose, (and I confess they have my sympathy,) they have already entered on their reward; or, as others think, they still sleep that sweet and dreamless sleep which the voice of the Son of Man, on the great appointed day, shall first disturb; of this we may be certain, that they abide as *living* souls, beneath the eye of Him, to whom all His children (it matters little, surely, whether for a few short hours they slumber or they wake) are dear.

My fellow-Christians, let us so live, that no day or hour shall find us friendless; no accident of life or death have power to make us so;—"and yet," let us still be able to say, whether those we love leave us, or we leave them, "and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me." We have only to choose God for our friend, and we shall not want for any good thing. All the best treasures of this life, though mixed, it may be, with wholesome bitters and corrective pains, will be ours; and in the next, we shall enjoy the richest blessings that God has to bestow, pure, without alloy. Then at length we shall find again, not only that ever-living, ever-present Friend, Who has out-stayed every mortal guest, and remained to console and to cheer us, when

the best beloved of our earthly associates could tarry no longer; Who has whispered words of comfort in our ear, and cheered us with looks of love, when no one else was at hand to break the solitude; then shall we find, not only Him, the Father, Who has been always with us, but, transporting thought! the partners, parents, children, brethren also, those who departed one by one for the unseen land, whom we would gladly have detained in our fond embraces, but could not; whom a voice of resistless power summoned from our side, and to whom we bade farewell with tears, when we found that they must go. He Who remained with us, accompanied them in their departure. In Him they, not less than ourselves, continued to live, and move, and have their being. As we in life, so they in death, still lived to God; and in Him we and they shall once more be united,—united, where there will be no fear of another such separation.

Let us make God, then, our trust. If He be our Shepherd, we shall not want. He will make us to lie down in green pastures; He will lead us beside the still waters. "Yea, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil, for Thou art with us; Thy rod and Thy staff will comfort us. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Amen and Amen.

XIX.

SEPARATION AND REUNION.

2 Samuel xii. 23.

"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

Some may be disposed to conjecture, that on the supposition of this life's being a state of probation or discipline for another, all ought to live to such an age, as to ensure the full attainment of this purpose. Why, they may feel inclined to ask, do many die before the moral discipline of life is properly commenced, and a still greater number before it is completed? The uncertainty of life, in all its stages, from infancy to old age, it may be replied, if it be not necessary, operates powerfully, to say the very least, to keep alive our tender interest and watchful care, both for ourselves and for each other. For *ourselves*, for if we could depend on length of days, we should pay much less attention both to our physical and our mental training; we should be more "slothful in business" and less "fervent in spirit;" we should trifle, till the disposition to serious effort was gone; we should procrastinate, till we lost the power to perform. For *each other*,—because the parents' interest in the children, the children's interest

in their parents, the interest of friends in their friends, would be far less wakeful and less intense, if it were not for the apprehended danger of losing them. Diseases of body and of mind, would be allowed to take their course with less of timely and earnest counteraction; estrangement and enmity would be longer cherished; the sun would more frequently be allowed to go down upon our wrath; the hour of reconciliation would be longer deferred; opportunities of benevolent and friendly intercourse would be less diligently sought. That we may not all of us live till to-morrow, is a potent reason why we should care for each other to-day.

That this life may be a state of discipline, therefore, it has been most wisely ordered that it should be an uncertain state; that, enter when we may on the first stage of our being, the period of our exit should be known to the Great Ordainer alone. But, to render the *un*certainty of life as certain as our best interests require, it is obviously necessary that multitudes should die in every season of life. Accordingly, this *is* the case: and, if it be true, as it is said, that the largest proportion perish in early life, we may perhaps find, upon reflection, wise reasons for this ordination also, since it is surely desirable, that the greatest anxiety should be felt, when the greatest care is required,—that the plant should be most carefully tended and cherished, at that season, when, (even though its existence were not endangered) its future health, and strength, and beauty, must most materially suffer from neglect; that the course of the slender rill, should be freed from obstructions near the fountain-head, so as to

increase the probability of its rolling onward, unimpeded, till other waters shall pour in their contributions, and lend their aid to deepen and widen its channel.

In childhood and youth those habits and associations are first formed, those dispositions and affections are first developed, on the nature and influence of which, the usefulness and happiness of future life are to depend. How important is it, then, that parental vigilance should be awake at that season, to assist the growth, and superintend the direction, both of the bodily and mental powers. Even if there were no danger of the springs of physical and moral life being actually dried up, how important is it that they should be kept clear and full.

Is there not mercy, then, in the dispensation which keeps the parents' interest constantly and tenderly alive to the welfare of a being, who is only the more fondly loved, for the very reason that he may be lost, and the more diligently cared for, because such care may be in vain? If none ever died in early life, is it probable that *that* solicitous attention would be bestowed, from the very first, on the preservation of bodily and mental vigour, to which maturity and age are so much indebted for the most valuable blessings they enjoy. It is the law of our nature, that our disposition to value, and our anxiety to retain a treasure, increases with the apprehended probability, or possibility, of being required to resign it. Our joys, like our other feelings, are often heightened by contrast, and are the most intense, when a degree of fear and trembling is mixed with them. As the shepherd of the parable rejoiced more over the single sheep that he had

lost and recovered than over the ninety and nine that went not astray, so would he have rejoiced, in like manner, to find it safe, had he been led, by any circumstance, however needlessly, to anticipate its loss. Not only that which we have lost, and found again, but that which we may lose, is the more precious to us on that account. We watch over the objects of our affection with a more watchful vigilance, we foster them with a tenderer love, we clasp them the more closely to our bosoms, because we know not the day, nor the hour, when *they* may be taken from *us*, or *we* from *them*.

But, in thus yielding to our own affections, we cultivate theirs; we fertilize their hearts, while we cherish the best feelings of our own. If at such seasons, we instilled no other lesson than love, it would be an important one, for "love is the fulfilling of the law;" but we cannot teach this lesson, without feeling moved to teach many others. True affection always rejoices to confer substantial blessings upon its object. The principle of love, strengthened within us, by whatever means, will render us at once more quick to perceive, and more anxious and diligent to supply and remove, the wants and deficiencies of those around us. The prospect of separation, on this principle, increases our interest in those we love. The sorrowful thought of the approaching time, when we shall see their face no more, at once magnifies their virtues in our estimation, and renders us more willing to bear patiently with their follies and their faults. In families, the premature death of the child, gives increased tenderness to the parent's heart; the children that remain are doubly

precious; their *real* welfare is more deeply pondered, and more anxiously provided for; and so, also, on the other hand, the premature death of either parent,—yea, the death of either, though it be not premature,—gives added strength, at once, to all the claims which the widowed survivor has upon the children's hearts. There may not be sufficient time, they think, for those demonstrations of filial gratitude, which they now feel to be more than ever due. The parent still left to them may sink into the grave, as the departed did, before the debt can be, in any fair measure, paid. How important, then, that time should not be lost—that gratitude should express itself while the heart of the benefactor can still be gratified by the expression!

With the life of those we love, the power of conferring blessings upon them will terminate. Those who have departed hence, return hither no more;—God has taken, and man has no charm to bring them back again. What we have omitted to do for them, we cannot *do;* what we have done against them, we cannot *undo*. The pain and sorrow that we have inflicted, we cannot heal, or soothe, or atone for. The sins that we have led, or provoked them to commit, we cannot induce or assist them to repent of. The lessons of wisdom and virtue that we neglected to impart by our conversation and example, or to derive from theirs, it is too late for us now to teach or learn. They are gone, to return no more, and the lost opportunity is lost. They cannot return to us. Well! let us comfort ourselves with the thought that for them, at least,—and if for them, then, surely, in some degreee for us

likewise,—the impossibility is a joyful one. We feel, (it is true,)—we cannot but deeply and bitterly feel,—the loss of the loved companions of our pilgrimage,—but we must be selfish indeed, if we cannot rejoice in their final deliverance from its troubles, and dangers, and fatigues: especially as we have received from God the assurance that their deliverance need not, if we be true to them and to ourselves, imply more than our temporary separation from them,—that we may, if we will, go to them, though they cannot return to us. How blessed is the hope,—and how earnestly should we labour to realize it!—of reunion in a world where our influences upon each other's conduct and happiness will be far more uniformly exerted than they ever could be here, and as favourable as we must needs desire them to be;—where we shall wound and grieve, and harass each other no more;—where we shall never again, either by deed or word, wilfully lessen the love of God and virtue in each other's breasts;—strengthen any evil or weaken any good propensity;—where we shall always be, what here we may wish and strive, but must often fail to be, friends, in the highest sense of the term,—helpers of the virtue of those around us,—one with Christ and God, and therefore with each other.

Yet let us remember that these promises, these hopes, are for the good alone. Between the polluted and the innocent, the wicked and the virtuous, those who die in their sins, and those who die in the Lord, there cannot be an immediate, even if God's mercy should permit a final reunion. The outer darkness must receive, at the very least for a season, the guest

who has neglected to provide the wedding garment of the soul. If there be truth in Scripture, there will be a separation between those who have sincerely and diligently obeyed, and those who have wilfully and obstinately transgressed the laws of God. How or where the line is to be drawn;—what degree of virtue will qualify for admission into the house of many mansions, and what of vice will be sufficient to exclude, and what must be the duration of such exclusion, we know not; but the all-wise and merciful Judge will decide unerringly, and conscience will ratify, even while she deprecates, His decision. Abundant reason have we to rejoice in the conviction, that He is not the hard master that some would represent Him, extreme to mark and severe to punish what is done amiss; but, as He hath proclaimed Himself, "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in compassion; in Whose eyes though a vile person be contemned, yet, if he will return unto the Lord, He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, He will abundantly pardon."

Had David been a stranger to the doctrine of the pardon of sin upon repentance, what hope could he have derived from the thought, that he should go to the child, who could not return to him? That child was unspotted from the world, when it pleased the Father to take it to Himself. "Of such," a greater than David has said, "is the kingdom of Heaven;" but David himself had sinned grievously, as the innocent child might itself have witnessed before the throne of God. On pardoning mercy alone, could the penitent monarch rest his hope of a reunion with the little one, for whom

he had wept and prayed. And how many of us have been, in a greater or less degree, similarly circumstanced! The innocent and the good have been taken from us. The infant of a few days has been snatched from our arms, "ere sin could blight or sorrow fade;" the ingenuous boy has been removed, "before wickedness could alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul;" the gentle girl has passed hence in her unsoiled loveliness, and, as the angel of Death has borne her spirit upwards, we have seen his smile reflected on the pale countenance below. In the maturity of years and virtue, in the ripened bloom of manly vigour, while all the energies of the head and heart were in their most active and efficient exercise, while "the Almighty was yet with him, and his children were about him," we have seen the good man, in the very meridian of his goodness, cut off from amongst the living; or with feelings of still tenderer interest, we have been called to witness the premature departure,—premature, at least, in our ignorance, we deemed it,—of "the virtuous woman, whose price was above rubies," in whom the heart of her husband "safely trusted that she would do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life;" "in whose tongue was the law of kindness," "whose children were wont to rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praised her."

Yes, my friends, we have probably, each one of us, at one time or other, been called to mourn the departure of the innocent and the good, in various stages of their existence. And how have we felt at such seasons? Have we not instinctively put the solemn ques-

tion to our hearts, whether we could cherish a well-grounded hope, of finding our lot conjoined with theirs hereafter,—of going to them, who could never more return to us? and has not the result of these inward questionings too often been, a painful conviction of unworthiness,—a fearful apprehension, lest our spirits should not be found worthy to associate hereafter, with the spirits of the just made perfect?

Happy, then, is it for us to know, that from God's house of many mansions, no true penitent, no sincerely and earnestly, however imperfectly, virtuous man, will be excluded; that for all such there will be a Father's welcome, and the joyful hailing of many brethren; that over all such, there will be joy in Heaven. Theirs, doubtless, will not be the best and the most beautiful mansions in their Father's house. Humbled by self-knowledge, purified by self-discipline, their own hearts will teach them to yield precedence, not merely cheerfully, but lovingly, to those whose piety and virtue, mingled with less alloy than theirs, have been more uniformly and consistently maintained: they will neither ask, nor hope, to assume high stations, or to share the full reward of the best-beloved of God, of the children that have been always with Him; that have never grieved the paternal heart, nor wandered from the paternal home; they will acknowledge the justice—yea, more, the mercy and the love—that assigns to them that relative position in the family, which is best suited to their deserts and their qualifications; and which, therefore, they must be best fitted to occupy with credit to themselves. Meekly will they take their place in

that mansion, however lowly, which the Great Lord of the household shall mark out for them: yet will they rejoice to think that they, too, are dwellers in their Father's house, have free access, at all times, to His sacred presence, and are not denied the benevolent regards, or the fraternal sympathy and counsel of those, who share with them the sheltering roof and bountiful provision of that blest abode.

Yes! my friends, there is comfort in the thought, comfort, which, at one period or other of our course, we may all of us, in various degrees, have needed; that, not for the purely pious and the eminently good alone, who have consistently maintained that character from the outset to the conclusion of their course, but for those also, who, having sinned, have truly and deeply repented of their sins, there is not merely the hope, but the promise, of admission into the presence of God, and the society of the just made perfect. This is a consolation of which all who have sinned and been brought to a sense of their folly, guilt, and danger, and have honestly resolved to burst asunder, and cast aside, the chains with which sin has shackled them, may avail themselves, and which the very best of men, in their deep penitence for sins which still beset, and frailties which still cling to them, notwithstanding all their struggles to complete their moral emancipation, will not despise. Where is the true Christian who has not, sometimes (might I not say, often?) found occasion to offer up the prayer of the poor publican, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner;" and to rejoice in the thought, that to the penitent, not less than to those who need

no repentance,—could such indeed be found on earth,—the gates of Heaven are open? The best men will be most aware of their own deficiencies; those who advance nearest to the standard of Christian perfection, will have the clearest perception how greatly they fall short of it, and their unfeigned humility, therefore, will teach them to rejoice that their Father's house has many mansions, to some *one* of which, however weak their abilities and defective their acquirements, by honest and unremitted virtuous endeavour, they will be sure to attain.

"We may rest satisfied of this," says Jortin, speaking of future punishments and rewards, "that sin shall neither enjoy an impunity irreconcileable with God's justice and majesty, nor endure sufferings inconsistent with His mercy and clemency. It is, I think, generally supposed that there will be a great variety of punishments; some, we are told by the highest authority, will be beaten with few, and others with many, stripes. To be deprived of some good, which, by a proper conduct, might have been secured and obtained, if it be attended with dissatisfaction or regret, is certainly a punishment, and if it lasts always, an eternal punishment. He who is in this condition, has lost his rank, and is placed far beneath many of those who were once his equals, without a possibility of retrieving the loss." "No less various," he continues, "may be the recompenses. The inexhaustible Fountain of Good has more than one blessing. He has gifts of a lower sort, for those who are not worthy to sit down on the right or on the left hand of his Son. In His house are many

mansions. In His widely extended kingdom there may be habitations, remote, perhaps, from His throne, yet not beyond His favourable influences; situated within the realms of light, appointed for beings of moderate improvements, yet of good inclinations, (of genuine, though imperfect virtue,) who shall be permitted to adore Him at a distance." "With whom," he adds in the words of our great Bard,—

> "With whom would I
> Gladly behold, though but His utmost skirts
> Of glory, and, far off, his steps adore."

Mistake not the pious and humble-minded author, beloved friends. It is not his object to damp your pious zeal, and weaken your virtuous exertions, but to kindle your heavenward aspirings and immortal hopes. He does not wish to lower your standard of moral excellence, to infuse the false idea that Heaven may be gained with little trouble, and that it is needless, therefore, to exert yourselves to gain it. No! his object is far different; it is, in truth, the very opposite to this. When he speaks of moderate improvements, of imperfect virtue, as likely to qualify some, through God's mercy, for a heavenly reward, it is because he knew that some are so unfavourably circumstanced, enriched with so few talents, or blessed with so few means and opportunities of calling into active exercise those which they have, that, with their best exertions, their improvements can be but moderate, their virtue but imperfect. In holding out hope to these, in exhorting them to do all that they can, and foretelling that the least reward, to which they can become entitled, will infinitely tran-

scend both their desires and deservings,—in representing the very lowest place in Heaven as something brighter far than mortal fancy can imagine, more blessed and glorious than mortal ambition can aspire to, he has not, surely, done anything to check our zeal, or encourage remissness, in that race which is to lead to such a goal. To tell us that the very least we can gain will be a pearl of price, is not, surely, to forbid us to deserve the most. Do what you can, is the Christian rule, and leave it to God to apportion the reward, which, if deserved at all, will infinitely transcend the merits of the receiver. He who does *what* he can, though it be but little, will gain much; but he who sets out with the determination to do as little as he can, though (contrary to all probability) that little should be much, violates the express condition on which the reward is offered, and will find, at last, that he has gained nothing.

When our blessed Lord enjoins upon the guest at the bridal feast to sit down, with contented humility, and a love that has taught him to prefer others to himself, in the lowest place, he forbids him not to cultivate and cherish that intrinsic excellence of character and conduct, which shall, perhaps, lead the all-wise and just Dispenser of the feast, to say, when He casts His searching eye upon him, "Friend, go up higher." My brethren, if we would receive an admission into our Heavenly Father's kingdom; if we would rejoin the departed innocent; if we would emulate the departed just; if we would behold and partake their happiness; if we would go to them who cannot return to us; if we would dissipate our trembling doubts,—and hope,

on just grounds, to be the happy sharers of their future, as we have been, for a season, (oh, how blest that season!) of their present lot, let us do what we *can*. This is all that a merciful God requires of us. He asks not a faultless, but a sincere, obedience. He promises that we shall reach the goal, if we will only run according to our strength. Yea, though we should have grievously sinned against Him; though in time past we should not even have endeavoured to obey Him, yet will He not exclude us, provided only we will now turn to Him, before it is too late, and prove, by bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, that we do indeed repent.

Beloved brethren, let not such warnings as these be lost upon us. The innocent and good whom we have loved, are gone before; the voices of children, and brethren, and sisters, and parents, and partners, and friends, are audible to the mental ear, as looking downwards from their heavenly abode, they summon us, with earnest manner and sweet familiar accents, thither; "O come to us," they say, "for we cannot return to you." Death has fallen upon them, and they are hidden from our eyes. But we shall greet them again at no distant day, when there shall be so many joyful meetings of the kindred souls of the innocent and good, and the smile of the universal Father shall rest upon the whole of His re-united family.

In this world not one of us shall find an abiding-place. How populous, how vital is the grave! People of all ages and of every rank crowd into it. On the cold pillow which it offers, the golden or the sable locks of infancy and youth, and the grey hairs of age, repose

together. There the staff of the beggar, the sword of the general, the wand of the courtier, and the sceptre of the king, lie side by side. There the oldest and the youngest, the mightiest and the meanest, are found to be alike sons of men, in whom there is no help. At the brink of that narrow house, we learn, at length, what it is, to have Christ for our hope, and God for our refuge.

Let the thought of our mortality turn us to God, before it is too late, to cultivate a more submissive piety, to exercise a more vigorous virtue, a more active benevolence, a more resolute self-denial. Let us arise, my friends, and for the love of all who are gone before us to the only "continuing city," enter into a more arduous struggle with the sins that do most easily beset us, and cultivate, more diligently, the seeds of virtue that God has sown in our hearts. Let us draw nearer than we have ever yet done to the throne of our Heavenly Father; let us take up, more resolutely, the cross of Christ. For the sake of those whom we love, let us sanctify ourselves. By the vigorous, faithful, persevering discharge of duty, let us prepare our own spirits, and the spirits of those who are dear to us, for admission into the redeemed family of God. So shall we go to those who cannot return to us; so shall the mournful partings and sad farewells of this life, be the sure pledges of an eternal reunion, sweet in their bitterness, prophetic of joy, even when they call forth tears. May God, of His infinite mercy, grant it, through Jesus Christ! Amen.

A LECTURE

ON THE TRUE ENDS AND PROPER METHOD OF LITERARY CULTURE.

"The extent of knowledge or things knowable," says Locke, in a most valuable essay on study, recently published for the first time, in Lord King's life of that great philosopher, "is so vast, our duration here so short, and the entrance, by which the knowledge of things gets into our understanding, so narrow, that the time of our whole life is not enough to acquaint us with all those things, I will not say which we are capable of knowing, but which it would be, not only convenient, but very advantageous to know." "It therefore much behoves us," he continues, "to improve our time and talents in this respect, and since we have a long journey to go, and the days are short, to take the straightest and most direct road we can." Under a conviction of the undeniable truth which Locke has thus simply and forcibly expressed, I may observe preliminarily, that real knowledge, upon whatever subject, from whatever source derived, will assist to fertilize the mind, and, by exercising, to improve its powers; we should not only accept it therefore with gratitude, when it is

thrown in our way, but also endeavour to retain it as correctly as we can. Once deposited in the mind, we shall find it for the most part like the food of the body, nourishing as well as light of carriage, imparting more strength than is required to support it; while it may sometimes, perhaps not unfrequently happen, that a merely casual acquaintance with portions of one branch of knowledge, may serve to illustrate truths, and clear up difficulties in others, with which we have purposely cultivated a closer intimacy. Correct information, therefore, on almost any subject, when offered unsought to our acceptance, should not be rejected; but the number of subjects on which we should ourselves deliberately and diligently seek it, ought to be comparatively few. Whether it is our object, to escape the mental and moral dangers that arise from shallowness and superficiality of learning, to accumulate a large stock of clearly defined and well arranged ideas, to gratify the virtuous ambition of extending the boundaries of science, or finally, to retain, as long as possible, an unimpaired and lively interest in the subjects of our knowledge; for all these purposes, it will be our wisdom not to wander too loosely and widely over the field of speculation, but to select certain definite subjects of close and accurate inquiry, and instead of knowing a little imperfectly of many things, to know much, thoroughly and satisfactorily, of a few.

But as the topics of investigation are numberless, it is absolutely necessary to make some selection. My present object is, therefore, to discover, if possible, some rule, or rules, by which the nature of that selec-

tion may be determined; and, in the first place, the superior *utility* of any object of pursuit, is an obvious reason why it should be preferred. When I speak of utility, however, as a ground of choice, and principle of selection, amongst the various objects of science, I would not be understood to use that term, in the confined sense in which some appear to understand it. I would speak not merely of utility to the body, but of utility to the whole man, considered as a being composed both of body and of mind;—who has intellect, imagination, and affections, as well as senses and appetites; who has a mental character to form, as well as a corporeal system to sustain; and who is an heir of eternity, as well as a sojourner in time. In the productions of some very able modern writers, whose talents and acquirements justly entitle them to exert a powerful influence on the public mind, I cannot but think that I observe a tendency to take a somewhat narrow view on this subject. To such names as those of Edgworth, Bentham, Mill, with others who might be mentioned of the same school, I should be sorry to appear deficient in respect. We are deeply indebted to them, for many most valuable contributions to the stock of human knowledge; and their zealous exertions to introduce what they deem an improved system of mental discipline and culture, are deserving of the highest praise. Whatever may be thought of the soundness of their views on some points, no one, acquainted with their writings, and possessed of any degree of candour, can deny that they have laboured, in many instances, with success as well as diligence,

to expose errors that prejudice had sanctioned, and to place truths of practical importance in a new and striking light. Nevertheless, in the exclusive predilection which some of these writers have manifested for physical, in preference to mental and moral science, and in their avowed contempt for almost everything that passes by the name of Literature, I seem to have a proof that they have not taken a sufficiently extensive view of our common nature, and that, were they to define their favourite epithet, *useful*, as applied to knowledge, we should find them employing it in much too limited a sense,—to designate chiefly, if not solely, what is promotive of the physical welfare and temporal prosperity of mankind.

In a plan which Mr. Bentham has published for the establishment of what he calls Chrestomatic Schools, or schools for the diffusion of *useful* learning, he proposes that the usual routine of classical education should be altogether superseded, except, perhaps, so far as the clerical order are concerned;—that the study of the poets, orators, moralists, and historians of Greece and Rome, should be relinquished as idle and unprofitable to the great majority of students;—and that for their works should be substituted,—not those of the best writers in the same departments in our own and other living languages,—a proposal which might have been deserving of some attention,—but a series of treatises on the phenomena and philosophy of external nature. His bill of fare for the youthful student is, indeed, sufficiently copious, for it includes, along with history, chronology, geography, and geometry, which have

generally, I believe, been taught under the old system, "mineralogy, botany, zoology, mechanics in general, with the kindred subjects of magnetism, electricity, galvanism, calistics, mining, geology, land-surveying, architecture, husbandry, physical economics, and hydraulics." That knowledge of this species is useful in its proper place and season, I am by no means disposed to deny, but that it is of more general utility than that which it is intended to supersede, I must be allowed to question.

The proper study of mankind, after all,—that in which the deepest interest is universally felt, and from a proficiency in which, the greatest advantages are sure to flow,—is *Man* himself. A thorough insight into the human mind is, generally speaking, far more valuable than an acquaintance, however extensive and minute, with the varying forms of matter. It is, for the most part,—might I not safely say, always,—of infinitely greater importance to our permanent welfare, that we should have just ideas of ourselves and our fellow-men, a distinct conception of what we are and what we ought to be, a clear and comprehensive knowledge of our nature, destiny, and duty as human beings, than that we should be able to analyze, classify, and describe, however correctly, all the inferior creatures and substances, animal, vegetable, and mineral, by which we are surrounded. The extension of our knowledge of matter, and consequently of our power over it,—for knowledge is always power,—is unquestionably in itself a gain; but dearly indeed will that gain be purchased, by the sacrifice of the still more precious knowledge of

the human heart, and of its springs of action, which the proposed substitution of mere physical science for what have been justly and expressively called the humane letters, would imply. To banish poetry, oratory, morals, history, and criticism from our schools, and to supply their places by zoology, botany, mineralogy, chemistry, mechanics, and the like, would, in my opinion, be to give the lower orders of being precedence to man himself, and to postpone the study of mind to the less important study of matter. That the knowledge of the physical sciences is useful, cannot be disputed: but that the knowledge of human nature is equally, or even more so, will not, surely, admit of any serious doubt. "The truth is," says Dr. Johnson, animadverting upon a plan similar to Mr. Bentham's, for the establishment of what that gentleman would call a Chrestomathic School, "the knowledge of external nature and of the sciences, which that knowledge requires or includes, is not the great or frequent business of the human mind. Whether we provide for action or conversation, whether we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first requisite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong; the next is an acquaintance with the history of mankind, and with those examples which may be said to embody truth, and prove, by events, the reasonableness of opinions. We are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance. Physical knowledge is of such rare emergence, that one may know another, half his life, without being able to estimate his skill in hydrostatics or astronomy, but his moral and prudential characters immediately appear. Those authors, therefore," he concludes,

"are to be read at schools, that supply most axioms of prudence, most principles of moral truth, and most materials for conversation, and these purposes are best served by poets, orators," (moralists, also, should have been included,) "and historians."

The question, *cui bono?*—"of what use?"—is, doubtless, a very pertinent and important one to ask, before we either enter ourselves, or induce others to enter, on the pursuit of any branch of knowledge; but it is a question which those are but ill-qualified to answer, who have taken narrow and partial views of our nature, and who fancy, as some appear to do, that nothing can be substantially useful to man, which does not add to what they call his substance; which does not bring food to his stomach, clothing to his back, or money to his pocket. Knowledge of the most valuable species; knowledge which has a direct tendency to raise its possessor in the scale of intellect and virtue; by the aid of which he is enabled to restrain his appetites, to harmonize his passions, to regulate his affections, to refine his tastes, and to reform and purify his habits, is not unfrequently depreciated, as of little or no value, by some of these common-sense philosophers, as they are wont to call themselves, and as I have no objection to call them, if they will only allow me to put my own meaning on the epithet, and to understand, by their *common* sense, sense of a very common and coarse character. Such knowledge as that which I have referred to, because it does not happen to be convertible into solid cash, there are not a few who would stigmatize as absolutely useless. Poetry, say they, mental

and moral philosophy, the *belles lettres*, the fine arts, classical and polite literature, of every kind,—what do all these teach, that any man can derive any positive benefit from learning? Can they minister to any bodily want? Can they give a man a breakfast, a dinner, or a supper? Can they clothe his limbs, or build a house over his head? Can they increase the produce of his fields, or find a market for his manufactured goods? or is it possible to convert them, by any process, into commodities that will tell in the ledger, or profitably occupy the strong-box? If not, *cui bono?*—what is the use of them? They confidently answer, *none*, and forthwith consign them to the same neglect with which, you will remember, that the celebrated Falstaff, after a like searching catechism, once treated that empty sound, called Honour. "Can Honour set to a leg? No.—Or an arm? No.—Or take away the grief of a wound? No.—Honour hath no skill in surgery then? No.—What is Honour? A word; air; the property of him that died o' Wednesday; a mere scutcheon; and, therefore," says Falstaff, very wisely, "I'll none of it."

It is precisely thus, that many regard as mere empty words, those branches of literature which have no material and tangible exponents of their value, if I may so express myself, and whose beneficial action is felt upon the mind alone. Take poetry, for instance. In vain will you tell the class of individuals of whom I speak, of its soul-refining and ennobling influences; of its power to kindle the imagination, to warm and purify the affections, to call forth kindly emotions and generous sympa-

thies, to deepen the impression of virtuous sentiments on the heart, and to fix them more firmly in the memory, to awaken the mind from the moral lethargy into which it is wont to sink, when the low concerns and base realities of this world engross it wholly, and by setting before it images of brighter beauty and purer bliss, than earth and time have it in their power to supply, at once to inspire the conviction, and excite the hope of heaven and eternity. In vain will you tell them that "Poetry," to use the language of a truly eloquent and powerful writer, "has a natural alliance with our best affections;" that "its great tendency and purpose, is to carry the mind beyond, and above, the beaten, dusty, weary walks of ordinary life; to lift it into a purer element, and to breathe into it more profound and generous emotion;" that "it reveals to us the loveliness of nature, brings back the freshness of youthful feeling, revives the relish of simple pleasures, strengthens our interest in human nature, by vivid delineations of its tenderest and loftiest feelings, spreads our sympathies over all classes of society, knits us by new ties with universal being, and through the brightness of its prophetic visions, helps faith to lay hold on the future life." In vain will you explain to them, that, though the letter of poetry be false, the spirit, nevertheless, may be profoundly true; that though the tale may be fictitious, the characters may yet be drawn from the life, and cast in Nature's own imperishable moulds; that the imagery may be vividly descriptive of Nature's sublimities and beauties, and well fitted to illustrate the striking analogies that sub-

sist, by the great Creator's will, between the worlds of matter and of mind; that the sentiments may be just, and beautiful, and adapted to cherish and strengthen the hatred of vice, and love of virtue, in the human breast; and, lastly, that though fiction may have suggested the incidents, probability, notwithstanding, may have prescribed the arrangement, and truth inferred the moral. In vain will you urge that this prejudice against poetry as idle and unprofitable verbiage is, in fact, refuted by the common sense and common feelings of mankind; who, from the earliest ages, have joined, with a consent all but unanimous, to place the true poet on the highest pinnacle of fame, and, in whose minds, no false philosophy shall ever be able to dissociate feelings of deep and fervent veneration and love, from the names of the great fathers of song.

> "Whether, with strength that time commands,
> An oak of ages, Homer stands;
> Or Milton, high-topt mountain pine,
> Aspiring to the light divine;
> Or, laurel of perpetual green,
> The Shakespeare of the living scene:
> Proudly each tree of knowledge waves
> Its branching words, its lettered leaves;
> The circling nations pour their vows,
> And the world's garland decks the boughs."

In vain, finally, will you remind the objectors, that even Divine wisdom has, not unfrequently, selected poetry as the best vehicle for Heavenly truth; that the Song of Moses, the Psalms of David, and the prophecies of Isaiah, are poetry itself; and that the spirit of poetry has deeply tinctured many, even, of the moral dis-

courses, the precepts, and parables of Jesus. Fruitless are all these arguments, while the palmary argument is wanting, the *argumentum ad crumenam.* Till the poet can be proved to be a productive labourer, in the sense in which that word is generally used by political economists; till he can be shown to have added something to the stock of that truly substantial wealth, which "moth and rust doth corrupt," there are many who will not admit that the epithet *useful,* can possibly be annexed, with any degree of propriety, either to his labours or his character.

Northcote, in his life of Sir Joshua Reynolds, relates that Josiah Tucker, Dean of Gloucester, at a meeting of the Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, said that he thought a pinmaker was a more useful and valuable member of society than Raphael. The Dean, it is evident, was a utilitarian, or Chrestomathian, of the narrow school. Poetry, it is easy to conceive, would have experienced no more indulgence from him, than painting. John Milton, and William Shakespeare, and even old Homer himself, in all probability, would have ranked, in his estimation, along with Raphael and Rubens, below the pinmaker; and he would have hailed with delight the project of banishing the useless classics from the schools, and supplying their places with the more profitable lucubrations of practical men, on chemistry, mechanics, mining, etc. I know not, however, that it would have been so, nor would I willingly do Dr. Tucker an injustice. He may have had ears, though he wanted eyes, and the speaking picture

of the poet (*pictura poesis*) may possibly have touched his soul, though the mute poetry of the painter was so entirely lost upon it. However this may be, we cannot wonder that the Dean's remark touched no answering chord in the breast, nor drew any sympathetic response from the lips or pen of our great English limner. "This is an observation," says Sir Joshua, (and most of my hearers, I should think, will admit the justice of the decision, even though it did not proceed from one who was likely to be perfectly impartial on the subject,) "of a very narrow mind; a mind that is confined to the mere object of commerce; that sees, with a microscopic eye, but a part of the great machine of the economy of life, and thinks that small part which he sees to be the whole. Commerce is the means, not the end, of happiness or pleasure; the end is a rational enjoyment (and improvement) of life, by means of sciences and arts. It is, therefore, the highest degree of folly, to set the means in a higher rank of esteem, than the end. It is as much as to say, that the brickmaker is a more useful member of society, than the architect who employs him. The usefulness of the brickmaker is acknowledged, but the rank of him and the architect, are very different. No man deserves better of mankind, than he who has the art of opening sources of *intellectual pleasure and instruction*, by means of the senses."

"*Instruction*," you will observe, as well as "*pleasure*," is represented, by this great artist, as flowing from the study of his favourite art; and here, in truth, lies the chief force of his argument. Doubtless, if the comparative tendency to promote innocent enjoyment, alone

had been considered, it is possible that, even in that case, the painter might have carried off the prize from the *protégé* of the Dean of Gloucester. But, when we add the power which the former possessed, of acting through the senses upon the soul, and calling its noblest faculties and purest feelings into exercise, the latter must indeed hide his diminished head. Surely, that is no mean or useless art, which enables its possessor to exhibit to those who have never seen them, and to recall to the vivid remembrance of those who have, the sublime and beautiful scenes of external nature,—

> "The fountain's fall; the river's flow;
> The woody valley, warm and low;
> The windy summit, wild and high,
> Roughly rushing on the sky;
> The pleasant seat, the ruined tower,
> The naked rock, the shady bower,
> The town and village, dome and farm:
> Each giving each a double charm,
> Like pearls upon an Ethiop's arm."

Surely, I say, *that* art cannot be pronounced useless, which enables him, whose engrossing occupation or contracted means, forbid him to extend the sphere of his personal observation beyond the circuit of a few short miles, to travel, nevertheless, by his fireside, into the most distant regions of the globe, and to realize to his fancy, those glories in creation, which, to his bodily eye, may never be revealed; that art, by the aid of which, the dweller in Leeds, for instance,—thanks to the friendly ministrations of the Northern Society,—without suspending his needful labours, or ever emerg-

ing from the clouded atmosphere of his native town, may occasionally feast his eyes, his imagination, and his heart, with the loveliest scenery that his dear native land can show; or yet further, experience, perhaps, those enobling sensations of religious awe and veneration, which thrill the mind of him who finds himself amongst the solitudes of the Alps, or the Andes, and is reminded by heights which his eye cannot measure, or depths which he cannot fathom, that there is a Being who is high above all height, deep below all depth, whose infinite extent of power, of wisdom, and of goodness, no human, no angelic mind, in the lapse of eternal ages, will have power to search out. Even laying aside all consideration of the higher departments of the art, forgetting the vivid delineation, which the historical painter has so often given, of the sublime and beautiful of the moral world; supposing that no such pictures had ever been in existence, as the cartoons of Raphael, the 'Last Judgment' of Michael Angelo, the 'Lord's Supper' of Da Vinci, the 'Salvator Mundi' of Carlo Dolce, or the 'Three Maries' of of Annibal Caracci; supposing that painting had no power to exhibit to the eye the workings of the soul; to make virtue speak from the canvas, and in the features; to embalm the minds of the wise and good that are no more;—yet who, I would ask, that had ever cast the eye of intelligence and feeling, on her faithful delineations of external nature; who, that had ever looked on a mountain defile of Salvator Rosa, a sunset of Claude, or any of the exquisite landscapes of our own Wilson, Glover, Gainsborough, Turner, would be

hardy enough to deny, that there may be utility as well as beauty in the labours of the pencil; or would venture to compare, if he reflected for a moment, the result of *his* exertions who transcribes the beauties of creation, as it were, for eyes that have never seen them, with the produce of that man's toils, how successful or praiseworthy soever, whose final and exclusive object has been fully accomplished, when he has gratified some animal want, or ministered to some bodily convenience?

Far be it from me, especially before such an audience,* to speak with contempt of the useful labours of him, who provides so valuable and desirable a substitute as a pin, for the skewer, or the thorn, which held together the vestments of our ancestors. I would fain believe that Dean Tucker, who was a writer of some repute in his day, dropped this observation hastily, and would have joined, himself, had he been allowed a single moment's reflection, in the great artist's condemnation of it. There are few wise men who do not, at some time of their lives, say very foolish things; and perhaps, if we knew but all, the Dean of Gloucester is less to be condemned than pitied, for the mischance which has enshrined and immortalized it, like a fly in amber, in the midst of Sir Joshua Reynolds's just and elegant remarks. While I maintain, then, that in the choice of our studies, as in the selection of our pursuits of every other kind, utility ought always to be consulted, and useful knowledge should, as such, obtain a preference, I beg leave to disclaim any intention of limiting that term (as some seem inclined to do), to those branches

* The Lecture was delivered first, in the Philosophical Hall, Leeds.

of science from which worldly profit may be derived, or of excluding any study as useless, on the sole ground that it happens likewise to be elegant and ornamental. In my mind, no kind of knowledge can be wholly unprofitable which conduces, in any degree, to the real welfare either of the body or the mind of man; which can supply him with any additional means, however trifling, of increasing his happiness, his wisdom, or his virtue. Of a nature partly earthly, and partly spiritual, existing in time, and destined to exist throughout eternity, he will welcome, if he is wise, every species of instruction, by which he can hope to benefit either his mortal or his immortal part.

Here, however, a ground of inference naturally suggests itself; and we cannot but infer, that if knowledge is to be desired, principally because it is useful, the ardour and diligence of our pursuit, should always bear a direct proportion to the probable extent and permanence of its utility. Therefore it is, that from all the various subjects of human investigation, I do not hesitate to select one, as of pre-eminent importance, and deserving of the first place in every man's plan of study, who professes to devote any portion of time to the improvement of his mind. You have already heard the opinion of our great English Moralist, that "whether we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first requisite is the religious or moral knowledge of right and wrong." In harmony with this sentiment of Johnson, is that of the immortal Locke, that, as "Heaven is our great business and interest," (I use his own words,) "the knowledge which may direct us

thither is certainly so too, so that this is, peradventure, the study that ought to take the first and chiefest place in our thoughts." Our great epic poet Milton, likewise seems to have been of the same mind; for, in his beautiful little treatise on education, which, along with some doubtful and disputable opinions, contains many truths most eloquently expressed, we find him setting it forth, as the end of all learning, to know God aright, and, out of that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him, to be like Him, "as we may the nearest, by possessing our souls of true virtue, which, being united to the heavenly grace of Faith, makes up the highest perfection"; and, in conformity with this sentiment, we find him enjoining, that the study of religion should occupy a portion of every day, throughout the whole course of education. After "evening repast, till bed-time," says he, speaking of children, "their thoughts will be best taken up in the easy grounds of religion and the story of Scripture; and afterwards when, as youths, they shall have arrived at some maturity of reason, so that they may, with some judgement, contemplate upon moral good and evil, then," he adds, "will be required a special reinforcement of constant and sound indoctrinating, to set them right and firm, instructing them more amply in the knowledge of virtue, and the hatred of vice; while their young and pliant affections are led through all the moral works of Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Plutarch, Laertius, and those Locrian remnants,* but still to be reduced in their nightward studies, where-

* He is here referring to a work of disputed authenticity, by Timæus of Locris, "On the Soul of the World and Nature."

with they close the day's work, under the determinate sentence of David or Solomon, or the Evangelists and Apostolic Scriptures." What reader of the 'Paradise Lost' can fail to be reminded, by this passage, of that sublime and touching introduction to the Third Book, in which the blind bard apostrophizes that light, which was to revisit his visual orbs no more?

> "Thee I revisit safe,
> And feel thy sovran vital lamp, but thou
> Revisit'st not these eyes that roll in vain
> To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn,
> So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,
> Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more
> Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt,
> Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
> Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief,
> Thee, Sion, and the flow'ry brooks beneath,
> That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
> Nightly I visit."

Milton, no longer young, Milton, old and blind, disdained not, it would appear from this passage, to put in practice himself the good custom, which in his letter to his friend Samuel Hartlib, he had recommended to the adoption of the child and of the youth. No day was allowed by him to pass away, unblessed by reading and reflection on the subject of man's chief concern.

> "Sion, and the flow'ry brooks beneath,
> That wash her hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,"

was still duly visited; and in his nightward studies, wherewith the aged bard closed his day's work, he was wont, as in his youth, to try his conduct and regulate his thoughts by "the determinate sentence of David or Solomon, or the Evangelists and Apostolic Scriptures."

Newton, too, that profoundest of natural philosophers,—that great light to rule the day in the heaven of astronomical science,—is well known to have devoted a large portion of his attention, during the whole of his life, to religious inquiries and Scriptural investigations. "When I look," says Dr. Chalmers, "at the steady and unmoved Christianity of this wonderful man, so far from seeing any symptom of dotage and imbecility, or any forgetfulness of those principles on which the fabric of his philosophy is reared, I see, that in sitting down to the work of a Bible Commentator, he hath given us the most beautiful and most consistent exemplification of them." I mean not to dwell longer on this topic, which, from its serious nature, may seem better suited to another place; but in treating of the choice of studies, I could not possibly pass it over altogether, and I rejoice, therefore, that I have been able to enforce my own view of it, by the opinions and the practice of men, whose authority all must venerate, and whom no one, it is likewise important to observe, can suspect of a professional bias. The sentiment which Newton, Locke, Milton, and Johnson,—the philosopher of matter, the philosopher of mind, the sublime poet, and the weighty moralist,—have united to enforce, and that not by their theory alone, but by their practice also, must surely deserve, I do not say to be adopted without thought, merely because they have advanced it, but to be seriously and deeply weighed and considered. Be it remembered, then, that we have the authority of these great names, to which, if necessary, many more of no mean distinction might have been

added, for the opinion, that the most important of all the sciences is the science of duty, arranged under the two great heads of theology and morals; and that, of this science, no man should willingly allow himself to remain in ignorance. It is lamentable to think that a truth so self-evident, so distinctly enforced by Divine authority, should need the support of any human testimony. It is certain, however, that there are multitudes of reading and thinking men, honest and zealous advocates for the extension of what they deem *useful* knowledge, who, notwithstanding, have never once thought of theology, as a subject with which they, or the majority of readers, have anything to do, and who would treat the idea of any person's studying it, who was not professionally bound to do so, as perfectly ridiculous. It is the just observation of an able writer, "that one of the causes of the diminution of respect for religion, is the custom of setting her apart from all the sciences; as if philosophy, reasoning, everything, in short, which is esteemed in earthly affairs, could not be applied to religion;—that an ironical veneration thus removes her to a distance from all the interests of life, and that she is, if the expression may be allowed, bowed out of the circle of the human mind." The phrase appears to me a particularly happy one, admirably expressive of the pretended deference, but real contempt, with which the sublimest and most valuable of all the sciences, is not unfrequently treated by the disciples of a narrow and worldly-minded philosophy, which begins, continues, and terminates in matter.

Closely connected with the study of theology and

morals, if not to be included, as indeed Locke seems to think, under the same head, I proceed to observe, is that of politics. Every man is a member, not only of the human family, but also of some one of those numerous smaller families, into which the great community of mankind is divided. Hence he has duties which he owes, not only to men in general, but also to his country in particular,—duties arising from the relations which society has formed, as well as from those which nature has constituted. If it is the first thing to be a virtuous man, blameless in all the relations of private life; the next is, to be a good citizen, able, intelligent, and willing to discharge those public duties, which the conscientious dictates of a truly patriotic spirit may require. We should be acquainted, therefore, with the laws and institutions of our country, not only that we may conform to and obey them, but also, that we may lend efficient aid, so far as we possess the power, in preserving them inviolate, where they are good, and in improving them, where they are susceptible of improvement. The efforts of an individual, it is true, to this end, can generally effect little; but a combination of individuals, it should be always remembered, forms the body politic; and the light of knowledge, by which the actions and operations of that body are to be directed, is, in truth, the aggregate of the rays that flow from many different minds. The force of opinion, it is well known, is at least one of the great framers of human institutions; and every man, therefore, should conscientiously and diligently lend his aid, however humble, in giving that force the best possible direction. On this

ground, all, who possess the ability, should endeavour to learn, wherein the welfare and happiness of nations consist, and, more especially, by what means the true and permanent prosperity of their native land, may be most certainly and extensively promoted.

And here, let me observe, that nothing, in my mind, would tend so materially to abate the violence of party spirit so lamentably prevalent, both on the subject of which I am now treating, and the still more important one to which I last referred, as the serious and conscientious study of them. Party spirit seldom, if ever, rages in the mind of the diligent and impartial searcher after truth. It is much easier to deal with sincere opinions, grounded on argument and embraced from conviction, than with opinions adopted through vanity or prejudice. "If, in our relations with men," says Madame De Staël, most justly and acutely, "we had to do only with what they really think, we should easily understand one another. It is what they affect to think, that breeds discord." The most violent partisans will generally, I believe, be found amongst those who cannot render a reason,—who seek to terrify, because they have not the power to convince, or employ their passion to conceal their feebleness, as the cuttle-fish darkens the sea with an inky fluid, to cover its retreat. He, who understands the real merits of a question, who knows thoroughly all that may be said on both sides of it, will be much more likely to make a fair allowance, even for what he regards as the errors of those who think differently from himself. He is at least aware, that those errors have an apparent foundation in truth, to the persons who embrace them.

If we could only enter into our opponents' views and feelings, place ourselves, as it were, in their position, and form some distant conception of the mode in which the arguments present themselves to their minds, we should be much more ready to pardon, and much less hasty to condemn, them. We rage against each other frequently, merely because, while we know our own reasons, we know little or nothing of the reasons of those who differ from us, and, therefore, hastily and uncharitably conclude, that they have none. How much more peaceably and happily would both religionists and politicians live together, if their characters more generally resembled that which Dr. Johnson has given of his friend, the Rev. Zachariah Mudge.—"His principles, both of thought and action," says he, "were great and comprehensive. By a solicitous examination of objections, and judicious comparison of opposite arguments, he attained what inquiry never gives but to industry and perspicuity, a firm and unshaken settlement of conviction. But his firmness was without asperity; for, knowing with how much difficulty truth is sometimes found, he did not wonder that many missed it."

Let these two grand topics of human interest, then,—the laws of God and the institutions of society,—be made, as they ought to be, the subject of every man's serious and impartial study; the pure love of truth supplying the motive, and regulating the mode, of inquiry, and we shall soon find ourselves much more generally agreed, than we are at present, and, where we cannot agree, much more ready and willing to agree to differ. "Our first and great duty," says Locke, in the Essay which

I have already quoted, "is to bring to our studies and inquiries after knowledge, a mind covetous of truth, that seeks after nothing else, and after that impartially; and embraces it, how poor, how contemptible, how unfashionable soever it may seem. This is that which all studious men profess to do, and yet it is that wherein I think very many miscarry."

The knowledge of God, then,—of our duty to Him, to our fellow-men generally, and to that particular community with which Providence has connected us,—or, to speak technically, the Sciences of Theology, Ethics, and Politics,—appear to me well entitled to rank first amongst the subjects of study. Next in importance to the knowledge of what man ought to be, is perhaps the knowledge of what he is. The science of human nature is no mean science in itself, and will generally be found a powerful, if not a needful auxiliary, to the science of human duty. These studies, indeed, according to my view, should always go hand-in-hand. The Theologian, the Moralist, or the Politician, can hope for little success, so long as he is ignorant of the real nature of the being, whose character and conduct it is his object to influence and direct. A correct acquaintance with the springs of action in man, a thorough knowledge of the nature of his understanding and affections, and of the mode in which the former may be convinced, and the latter excited and influenced, is obviously necessary to him who would exert any very powerful or useful influence over the conduct of his fellow-men. As a means of attaining this, at least in part, I may venture to recommend the study of Mental Philosophy, which, it can-

not be denied, has thrown some valuable light on the difficult subject of the mind's operations; has made us acquainted with some of the wonders of our internal structure, and enabled us in some measure to conceive, though I grant imperfectly, "how habits are formed, how prejudices are engendered, how the judgment is influenced, how the will is determined, how the character is superinduced, and, consequently, how habits, prejudices, judgment, will, and character, may be modified, changed, or fixed." For communicating a theoretical knowledge of man, the philosophy of mind, as set forth in the works of Locke, Berkeley, Hartley, Reid, Stewart, Brown, etc., may be of some service; but, for giving a practical knowledge of him, there is nothing like the study of history and biography, and an extensive perusal of those standard works of poetry, oratory, and morals, which, flowing from the heart, and, as their popularity proves, successfully addressed to the heart, cannot but show of what materials the heart is made, how it acts, and how it is to be acted upon. In history and biography, we see what men are by their actions. From the favourite productions of their genius, we may learn how they think and feel. By the judicious study of all of these, we cannot fail to obtain some insight into the valuable and important science of human nature.

In ranking physical science somewhat lower than mental and moral, I have no wish to depreciate its utility. On the contrary, I am well aware that the knowledge of the animate and inanimate creation, and of the manner in which their properties and powers

may be rendered subservient to our good, is not only highly valuable in itself, but may likewise be employed as a most useful subsidiary to those other species of knowledge of which I have already spoken. The knowledge of the *creature*, I would not by any means forget, *is the knowledge of the Creator*. Natural History, in all its branches, to the pious mind, is Natural Theology; and, in that view, ranks with the sublimest of the sciences. The devout naturalist pursues a dignified object, by means the most delightful. "Whether he be at home or abroad," says an elegant and forcible writer, whom some of my hearers will remember with respect, the late Reverend William Wood, "in every different clime, and in every season of the year, universal nature is before him, and invites him to a banquet, richly replenished with whatever can invigorate his understanding or gratify his mental taste. The earth on which he treads, the air in which he moves, the sea along whose margin he walks, all teem with objects which keep his attention perpetually awake, excite him to healthful activity, and charm him with an ever-varying succession of the beautiful, the wonderful, the useful, and the new. And, if, in conformity with the direct tendency of such occupations, he rise from the creature to the Creator, and consider the duties, which naturally result from his own situation and rank, in this vast system of being, he will derive as much satisfaction from the anticipation of the future, as from the experience of the present, and the recollection of the past. The mind of the pious naturalist is always cheerful, always animated with the noblest and most benign feelings. Every repeated

observation, every unexpected discovery, directs his thoughts to the Great Source of all order and all good, and harmonizes all his faculties with the general voice of Nature. The men,"

> "Whom Nature's works can charm, with God himself
> Hold converse: grow familiar day by day
> With His conceptions, act upon His plan,
> And form to His, the relish of their souls."

In every word of this animated eulogium on Natural History, I can cordially join; nor would I have it supposed, that, in placing physical, below mental and moral science, it is by any means my intention to speak lightly of it. Though man may surely be regarded as the last, best work of his Creator, every creature, in its place and order is beautiful and good; nor can we enter into an examination of the structure, the history, or the habits of any one of them, without improvement and delight. Even when physical science is studied, for the sole end of adding to our personal convenience and comfort, it has great and positive value. In providing for the bodily wants of our species, in contriving means for their more easy and plentiful supply, we are often, I am well aware, providing means, at the same time, for the improvement of their minds. The elaboration of the arts, without a question, has a tendency to render life less laborious, as well as less precarious; and, in doing so, to extend the time, and increase the inclination and facility, for mental cultivation. To contrive the means of shortening bodily labour, is to give greater room for the development of mental energy. That this has not been, in fact,

more generally the case hitherto, may be owing, in part, to defects in our civil institutions, and other counteracting causes, which, at some future period, may be removed. Amongst the good effects to be anticipated from our improvements in physical science, and our increased mechanical ingenuity, I cannot but enumerate the performance, by mechanism, of a large proportion of those actions and processes which are purely mechanical, and the consequent exemption of the human being, from much of that severe but unintellectual labour, in the performance of which the energies of the body are spent, and those of the mind rendered torpid. The increase of machinery, I trust, will operate, in the course of time, though it may not yet have done so, to decrease the number of mere mechanics, and to give to those, who labour with the body, time and opportunity to cultivate the mind. I do not deny, therefore, that those whose employment it is, by observing the processes of nature, to improve the processes of art, and thus to add to the number of our temporal conveniences and comforts, or to increase our facility of producing them, are at the same time promoting the best interests of the species, and contributing, certainly though indirectly, to their intellectual and moral elevation. We must distinguish here, however, between what they are doing for the species, and what they are doing for themselves. The exclusive devotion of their time and thoughts to the class of pursuits referred to, may be advantageous to the community, and yet not prove promotive of their own highest interests. He who is exclusively an agriculturist, a chemist, a mechanist,

may confer most important benefits upon society, not only by increasing its temporal comforts, but also by enabling it to abstract some portion of that time for mental, which was formerly devoted to manual, labour. It will not follow, however, that the devotee of physical science might not, himself, have risen higher in the scale of intellect, by devoting some portion, at least, of his attention to subjects of a different and more exalted kind. Who will pretend to say that the most ingenious mechanist, who had narrowed his mind to the contemplation of the action of the several parts of inanimate nature upon each other, could win the prize of intellectual eminence from one, who, with equal powers of mind, had, from the first, walked abroad amongst his species, made man his study, and informed himself, that he might inform others, of his nature, his interests, and his duty? In the scale of dignity, therefore, and utility to the student, considered as an intellectual, social, and immortal being, I cannot but think that the study of the rational and spiritual precedes that of the material and brute creation,—that the science of *mind* is superior to that of *matter*.

But I observe, in the last place, that it is not by the consideration of their intrinsic dignity and utility alone, that we either can, or ought to be guided, in the choice of our intellectual pursuits. It is desirable for the species, and therefore for the individual, that every branch of science should receive its share of attention, which could not be the case, if all were to be determined in their choice, by the intrinsic dignity of the subject. The arts assist, the sciences shed light upon each

other; and it is with these offsprings of intellect, as with the children of the human race; they are joined by kindred ties; they form a closely united family, the members of which must rejoice or suffer together, the neglect of one of which would inflict an injury upon all. Wisely, therefore, has it been arranged by Providence, that the circumstances of our lot, shall, in part at least, determine for us, to which of the various branches of knowledge we shall devote our principal attention. While a certain portion of liberty is allowed us, our choice is partially restricted. He who fixes the bounds of our habitation, in so doing, helps us to make an early and decided selection of some of the paths, in which our minds, as well as our feet, must tread;—selects for us peculiar topics of investigation, and on these, at least, spares us the indecision, that might arise to the perfectly uninfluenced mind, from waverings of opinion and fluctuations of taste, hovering, like bees, over the flowery field of science, dazzled and distracted by the rich variety. We might loiter away the sunny hour, uncertain where to settle, were it not for a principle of selection, with which a higher Power has supplied us, directing us to plants whose juices may not be left unextracted, derive the remainder of our honeyed store from whatsoever source we may. Our peculiar station in life, which is frequently, if not generally, determined by circumstances over which we have slight control, indicates, for the most part, certain departments of science, with which it will be both our interest and our duty to render ourselves familiar. Our means and opportunities limit our range still further, and our ta-

lents and our taste may be wisely consulted, in completing the selection.

The general conclusions which I would draw from what I have said, are these:—1. That the range of our studies should neither be too wide nor too limited; that to expand our minds and widen the sphere of our sympathies, we should acquire some knowledge of several subjects; that, to constitute us benefactors of our race,—to enable us to make some original additions to the general stock of knowledge, we should study some few subjects, accurately and deeply. 2. That those subjects, the knowledge of which seems essential to our moral welfare, should receive the diligent attention of all. 3. That the study of *man* should generally take precedence of the study of *matter*. 4. That those topics, of which we cannot be ignorant, without risking the neglect or the imperfect discharge of professional duties, must not, by any means, be unattended to. And, 5. That in the choice of the rest of our pursuits, we may be guided by the joint consideration of the beneficial consequences that are to result to others and ourselves, and of our own peculiar fitness,—in point of situation, opportunity, talent, and taste,—for carrying them on with spirit and success.

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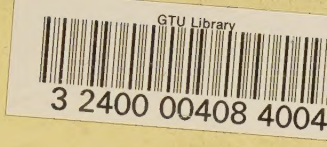

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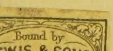
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